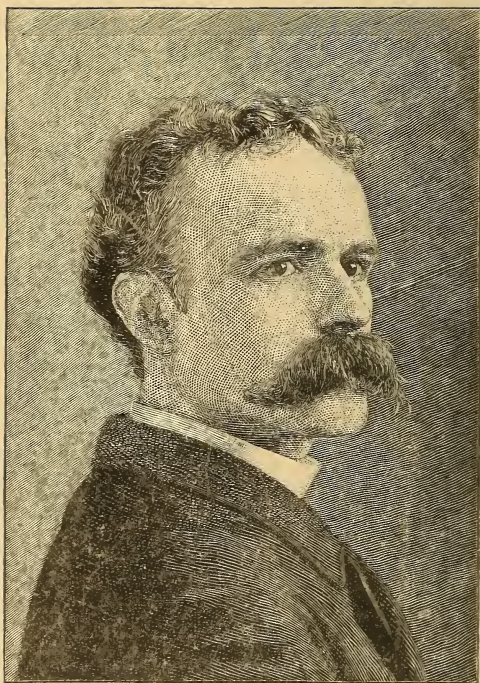


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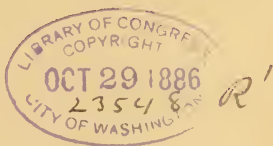
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CONFESSIONS AND CRITICISMS

BY

JULIAN HAWTHORNE



BOSTON

TICKNOR AND COMPANY

1887

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CONFESSIONS AND CRITICISMS.

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CHAPTER I.

A PRELIMINARY CONFESSION.

IN 1869, when I was about twenty-three years old, I sent a couple of sonnets to the revived *Putnam's Magazine*. At that period I had no intention of becoming a professional writer: I was studying civil engineering at the Polytechnic School in Dresden, Saxony. Years before, I had received parental warnings — unnecessary, as I thought — against writing for a living. During the next two years, however, when I was acting as hydrographic engineer in the New York Dock Department, I amused myself by writing a short story, called "Love and Counter-Love," which was published in *Harper's Weekly*, and for which I was paid fifty dollars. "If fifty dollars can be so easily earned," I thought, "why not go on adding to my income in this way from time to time?" I was aided and abetted in the idea by the late Robert

Carter, editor of *Appletons' Journal*; and the latter periodical and *Harper's Magazine* had the burden, and I the benefit, of the result. When, in 1872, I was abruptly relieved from my duties in the Dock Department, I had the alternative of either taking my family down to Central America to watch me dig a canal, or of attempting to live by my pen. I bought twelve reams of large letter-paper, and began my first work, — “Bressant.” I finished it in three weeks; but prudent counselors advised me that it was too immoral to publish, except in French: so I recast it, as the phrase is, and, in its chastened state, sent it through the post to a Boston publisher. It was lost on the way, and has not yet been found. I was rather pleased than otherwise at this catastrophe; for I had in those days a strange delight in rewriting my productions: it was, perhaps, a more sensible practice than to print them. Accordingly, I rewrote and enlarged “Bressant” in Dresden (whither I returned with my family in 1872); but — immorality aside — I think the first version was the best of the three. On my way to Germany I passed through London, and there made the acquaintance of Henry S. King, the publisher, a charming but imprudent man, for he paid me one

hundred pounds for the English copyright of my novel: and the moderate edition he printed is, I believe, still unexhausted. The book was received in a kindly manner by the press; but both in this country and in England some surprise and indignation were expressed that the son of his father should presume to be a novelist. This sentiment, whatever its bearing upon me, has undoubtedly been of service to my critics: it gives them something to write about. A disquisition upon the mantle of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and an analysis of the differences and similarities between him and his successor, generally fill so much of a notice as to enable the reviewer to dismiss the book itself very briefly. I often used to wish, when, years afterwards, I was myself a reviewer for the *London Spectator*, that I could light upon some son of his father who might similarly lighten my labors. Meanwhile, I was agreeably astonished at what I chose to consider the success of "Bressant," and set to work to surpass it in another romance, called (for some reason I have forgotten) "Idolatry." This unknown book was actually rewritten, in whole or in part, no less than seven times. *Non sum qualis eram*. For seven or eight years past I have seldom rewritten one of the many pages which

circumstances have compelled me to inflict upon the world. But the discipline of "Idolatry" probably taught me how to clothe an idea in words.

By the time "Idolatry" was published, the year 1874 had come, and I was living in London. From my note-books and recollections I compiled a series of papers on life in Dresden, under the general title of "Saxon Studies." Alexander Strahan, then editor of the *Contemporary Review*, printed them in that periodical as fast as I wrote them, and they were reproduced in certain eclectic magazines in this country, — until I asserted my American copyright. Their publication in book form was followed by the collapse of both the English and the American firm engaging in that enterprise. I draw no deductions from that fact: I simply state it. The circulation of the "Studies" was naturally small; but one copy fell into the hands of a Dresden critic, and the manner in which he wrote of it and its author repaid me for the labor of composition and satisfied me that I had not done amiss.

After "Saxon Studies" I began another novel, "Garth," instalments of which appeared from month to month in *Harper's Magazine*. When it had run for a year or more, with no signs of abate-

ment, the publishers felt obliged to intimate that unless I put an end to their misery they would. Accordingly, I promptly gave Garth his quietus. The truth is, I was tired of him myself. With all his qualities and virtues, he could not help being a prig. He found some friends, however, and still shows signs of vitality. I wrote no other novel for nearly two years, but contributed some sketches of English life to *Appletons' Journal*, and produced a couple of novelettes, — “Mrs. Gainsborough's Diamonds” and “Archibald Malmaison,” — which, by reason of their light draught, went rather farther than usual. Other short tales, which I hardly care to recall, belong to this period. I had already ceased to take pleasure in writing for its own sake, — partly, no doubt, because I was obliged to write for the sake of something else. Only those who have no reverence for literature should venture to meddle with the making of it, — unless, at all events, they can supply the demands of the butcher and baker from an independent source.

In 1879, “Sebastian Strome” was published as a serial in *All the Year Round*. Charley Dickens, the son of the great novelist, and editor of the magazine, used to say to me while the story was

in progress, "Keep that red-haired girl up to the mark, and the story will do." I took a fancy to Mary Dene myself. But I uniformly prefer my heroines to my heroes; perhaps because I invent the former out of whole cloth, whereas the latter are often formed of shreds and patches of men I have met. And I never raised a character to the position of hero without recognizing in him, before I had done with him, an egregious ass. Differ as they may in other respects, they are all brethren in that; and yet I am by no means disposed to take a Carlylese view of my actual fellow-creatures.

I did some hard work at this time: I remember once writing for twenty-six consecutive hours without pausing or rising from my chair; and when, lately, I re-read the story then produced, it seemed quite as good as the average of my work in that kind. I hasten to add that it has never been printed in this country: for that matter, not more than half my short tales have found an American publisher. "Archibald Malmaison" was offered seven years ago to all the leading publishers in New York and Boston, and was promptly refused by all. Since its recent appearance here, however, it has had a circulation larger perhaps

than that of all my other stories combined. But that is one of the accidents that neither author nor publisher can foresee. It was the horror of "Archibald Malmaison," not any literary merit, that gave it vogue,—its horror, its strangeness, and its brevity.

On Guy Fawkes's day, 1880, I began "Fortune's Fool,"—or "Luck," as it was first called,—and wrote the first ten of the twelve numbers in three months. I used to sit down to my table at eight o'clock in the evening and write till sunrise. But the two remaining instalments were not written and published until 1883, and this delay and its circumstances spoiled the book. In the interval between beginning and finishing it another long novel—"Dust"—was written and published. I returned to America in 1882, after an absence in Europe far longer than I had anticipated or desired. I trust I may never leave my native land again for any other on this planet.

"Beatrice Randolph," "Noble Blood," and "Love—or a Name," are the novels which I have written since my return; and I also published a biography, "Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife." I cannot conscientiously say that I have found the literary profession—in and for itself—entirely

agreeable. Almost everything that I have written has been written from necessity; and there is very little of it that I shall not be glad to see forgotten. The true rewards of literature, for men of limited calibre, are the incidental ones, — the valuable friendships and the charming associations which it brings about. For the sake of these I would willingly endure again many passages of a life that has not been all roses; not that I would appear to belittle my own work: it does not need it. But the present generation (in America at least) does not strike me as containing much literary genius. The number of undersized persons is large and active, and we hardly believe in the possibility of heroic stature. I cannot sufficiently admire the pains we are at to make our work — embodying the aims it does — immaculate in form. Form without idea is nothing, and we have no ideas. If one of us were to get an idea, it would create its own form, as easily as does a flower or a planet. I think we take ourselves too seriously: our posterity will not be nearly so grave over us. For my part, I do not write better than I do, because I have no ideas worth better clothes than they can pick up for themselves. “Whatever is worth doing at all is

worth doing with your best pains," is a saying which has injured our literature more than any other single thing. How many a lumber-closet since the world began has been filled by the results of this purblind and delusive theory! But this is not autobiographical,—save that to have written it shows how little prudence my life has taught me.

.

I remember wondering, in 1871, how anybody could write novels. I had produced two or three short stories; but to expand such a thing until it should cover two or three hundred pages seemed an enterprise far beyond my capacity. Since then, I have accomplished the feat only too often; but I doubt whether I have a much clearer idea than before of the way it is done; and I am certain of never having done it twice in the same way. The manner in which the plant arrives at maturity varies according to the circumstances in which the seed is planted and cultivated; and the cultivator, in this instance at least, is content to adapt his action to whatever conditions happen to exist.

While, therefore, it might be easy to formulate a cut-and-dried method of procedure, which should

be calculated to produce the best results by the most efficient means, no such formula would truly represent the present writer's actual practice. If I ever attempted to map out my successive steps beforehand, I never adhered to the forecast or reached the anticipated goal. The characters develop unexpected traits, and these traits become the parents of incidents that had not been contemplated. The characters themselves, on the other hand, cannot be kept to any preconceived characteristics; they are, in their turn, modified by the exigencies of the plot.

In two or three cases I have tried to make portraits of real persons whom I have known; but these persons have always been more lifeless than the others, and most lifeless in precisely those features that most nearly reproduced life. The best results in this direction are realized by those characters that come to their birth simultaneously with the general scheme of the proposed events; though I remember that one of the most lifelike of my personages (Madge, in the novel "Garth") was not even thought of until the story of which she is the heroine had been for some time under consideration.

Speaking generally, I should suppose that the

best novels are apt to be those that have been longest in the novelist's mind before being committed to paper; and the best materials to use, in the way of character and scenery, are those that were studied not less than seven or eight years previous to their reproduction. Thereby is attained that quality in a story known as atmosphere or tone, perhaps the most valuable and telling quality of all. Occasionally, however, in the rare case of a story that suddenly seizes upon the writer's imagination and despotically "possesses" him, the atmosphere is created by the very strength of the "possession." In the former instance, the writer is thoroughly master of his subject; in the latter, the subject thoroughly masters him; and both amount essentially to the same thing, harmony between subject and writer.

With respect to style, there is little to be said. Without a good style, no writer can do much; but it is impossible really to create a good style. A writer's style was born at the same time and under the same conditions that he himself was. The only rule that can be given him is, to say what he has to say in the clearest and most direct way, using the most fitting and expressive words. But often, of course, this advice is like that of the doc-

tor who counsels his patient to free his mind from all care and worry, to live luxuriously on the fat of the land, and to make a voyage round the world in a private yacht. The patient has not the means of following the prescription. A writer may improve a native talent for style; but the talent itself he must either have by nature, or forever go without. And the style that rises to the height of genius is like the Phoenix; there is hardly ever more than one example of it in an age.

Upon the whole, I conceive that the best way of telling how a novel may be written will be to trace the steps by which some one novel of mine came into existence, and let the reader draw his own conclusions from the record. For this purpose I will select one of the longest of my productions, "Fortune's Fool."

It is so long that, rather than be compelled to read it over again, I would write another of equal length; though I hasten to add that neither contingency is in the least probable. In very few men is found the power of sustained conception necessary to the successful composition of so prolix a tale; and certainly I have never betrayed the ownership of such a qualification. The tale,

nevertheless, is an irrevocable fact; and my present business it is to be its biographer.

When, in the winter of 1879, the opportunity came to write it, the central idea of it had been for over a year cooking in my mind. It was originally derived from a dream. I saw a man who, upon some occasion, caught a glimpse of a woman's face. This face was, in his memory, the ideal of beauty, purity, and goodness. Through many years and vicissitudes he sought it; it was his religion, a human incarnation of divine qualities.

At certain momentous epochs of his career, he had glimpses of it again; and the effect was always to turn him away from the wrong path and into the right. At last, near the end of his life, he has, for the first time, an opportunity of speaking to this mortal angel and knowing her; and then he discovers that she is mortal indeed, and chargeable with the worst frailties of mortality. The moral was that any substitute for a purely spiritual religion is fatal, and, sooner or later, reveals its rottenness.

This seemed good enough for a beginning; but, when I woke up, I was not long in perceiving that it would require various modifications before being suitable for a novel; and the first modifica-

tions must be in the way of rendering the plot plausible. What sort of a man, for example, must the hero be to fall into and remain in such an error regarding the character of the heroine? He must, I concluded, be a person of great simplicity and honesty of character, with a strong tinge of ideality and imagination, and with little or no education.

These considerations indicated a person destitute of known parentage, and growing up more or less apart from civilization, but possessing by nature an artistic or poetic temperament. Foreglimpses of the further development of the story led me to make him the child of a wealthy English nobleman, but born in a remote New England village. His artistic proclivities must be inherited from his father, who was, therefore, endowed with a talent for amateur sketching in oils; which talent, again, led him, during his minority, to travel on the continent for purposes of artistic study. While in Paris, this man, Floyd Vivian, meets a young Frenchwoman, whom he secretly marries, and with whom he elopes to America. Then Vivian receives news of his father's death, compelling him to return to England; and he leaves his wife behind him.

A child (Jack, the hero of the story) is born during his absence, and the mother dies. Vivian, now Lord Castleman, finds reason to believe that his wife is dead, but knows nothing of the boy; and he marries again. The boy, therefore, is left to grow up in the Maine woods, ignorant of his parentage, but with one or two chances of finding it out hereafter. So far, so good.

But now it was necessary to invent a heroine for this hero. In order to make the construction compact, I made her Jack's cousin, the daughter of Lord Vivian's younger brother, who came into being for that purpose. This brother (Murdock) was a black sheep; and his daughter, Madeleine, was adopted by Lord Vivian, because I now perceived that Lord Vivian's conscience was going to trouble him with regard to his dead wife and her possible child, and that he would make a pilgrimage to New England to settle his doubts, taking Madeleine with him; intending, if no child by the first marriage were forthcoming, to make Madeleine his heir; for he had no issue by his second marriage. This journey would enable Jack and Madeleine to meet as children. But it was necessary that they should have no suspicion of their cousinship. Consequently, Lord Vivian, who alone

could acquaint them with this fact, must die in the very act of learning it himself. And what should be the manner of his death ?

At first, I thought he should be murdered by his younger brother ; but I afterwards hit upon another plan, that seemed less hackneyed and provided more interesting issues. Murdock should arrive at the Maine village at the same time as Lord Vivian, and upon the same errand, to get hold of Lord Vivian's son, of whose existence he had heard, and whom he wished to get out of the way, in order that his own daughter, Madeleine, might inherit the property. Murdock should find Jack, and Jack, a mere boy, should kill him, though not, of course, intentionally, or even consciously (for which purpose the machinery of the Witch's Head was introduced).

With Murdock's death, the papers that he carried, proving Jack's parentage, should disappear, to be recovered long afterward, when they were needed. Lord Vivian should quietly expire at the same time, of heart disease (to which he was forthwith made subject), and Madeleine should be left temporarily to her own devices. Thus was brought about her meeting with Jack in the cave. It was their first meeting ; and Jack must remember her

face, so as to recognize her when they meet, years later, in England. But, as it was beyond belief that the girl's face should resemble the woman's enough to make such a recognition possible, I devised the miniature portrait of her mother, which Madeleine gave to Jack for a keepsake, and which was the image of what Madeleine herself should afterward become.

Something more was needed, however, to complete the situation; and to meet this exigency, I created M. Jacques Malgré, the grandfather of Jack, who had followed his daughter to America, in the belief that she had been seduced by Vivian; who had brought up Jack, hating him for his father's sake, and loving him for his mother's sake; and who dwelt year after year in the Maine village, hoping some day to wreak his vengeance upon the seducer. But when M. Malgré and Vivian at last meet, this revenge is balked by the removal of its supposed motive; Vivian having actually married Malgré's daughter, and being prepared to make Jack heir of Castlemere. Moral: "‘Vengeance is mine,’ saith the Lord, ‘I will repay.’"

The groundwork of the story was now sufficiently defined. Madeleine and Jack were born

and accounted for. They had met and made friends with each other without either knowing who the other was; they were rival claimants for the same property, and would hereafter contend for it; still, without identifying each other as the little boy and girl that had met by chance in the cave so long ago. In the meanwhile, there might be personal meetings, in which they should recognize each other as persons though not by name; and should thus be cementing their friendship as man and woman, while, as Jack Vivian and Madeleine, they were at open war in the courts of law.

This arrangement would need careful handling to render it plausible; but it could be done. I am now of opinion, however, that I should have done well to have given up the whole fundamental idea of the story, as suggested by the dream. The dream had done its office when it had provided me with characters and materials for a more probable and less abstruse and difficult plot. All further dependence upon it should then have been relinquished, and the story allowed to work out its own natural and unforced conclusion. But it is easy to be wise after the event; and the event, at this time, was still in the future.

As Madeleine was to be the opposite of the sinless, ideal woman that Jack was to imagine her to be, it was necessary to subject her to some evil influence; and this influence was embodied in the form of Bryan Sinclair, who, though an afterthought, came to be the most powerful figure in the story. But, before he would bring himself to bear upon her, she must have reached womanhood; and I also perceived that Jack must become a man before the action of the story, as between him and Madeleine, could continue. An interval of ten or fifteen years must therefore occur; and this was arranged by sending Jack into the western wilderness of California, and fixing the period as just preceding the date of the California gold fever of '49.

Jack and Bryan were to be rivals for Madeleine; but artistic considerations seemed to require that they should first meet and become friends much in the same way that Jack and Madeleine had done. So I sent Bryan to California, and made him the original discoverer of the precious metal there; brought him and Jack together; and finally sent them to England in each other's company. Jack, of course, as yet knows nothing of his origin, and appears in London society

merely as a natural genius and a sculptor of wild animals.

By this time, I had begun to make Madeleine's acquaintance, and, in consequence, to doubt the possibility of her becoming wholly evil, even under the influence of Bryan Sinclair. There would be a constant struggle between them; she would love him, but would not yield to him, though her life and happiness would be compromised by his means. He, on the other hand, would love her, and he would make some effort to be worthy of her; but his other crimes would weigh him down, until, at the moment when the battle cost her her life, he should be destroyed by the incarnation of his own wickedness, in the shape of Tom Berne.

This was not the issue that I had originally designed, and, whether better or worse than that, did not harmonize with what had gone before. The story lacked wholeness and continuous vitality. As a work of art, it was a failure. But I did not realize this fact until it was too late, and probably should not have known how to mend matters had it been otherwise. One of the dangers against which a writer has especially to guard is that of losing his sense of proportion in the conduct of a story. An episode that has little

relative importance may be allowed undue weight, because it seems interesting intrinsically, or because he has expended special pains upon it. It is only long afterward, when he has become cool and impartial, if not indifferent or disgusted, that he can see clearly where the faults of construction lie.

I need not go further into the details of the story. Enough has been said to give a clew to what might remain to say. I began to write it in the winter of 1879-80, in London; and, in order to avoid noise and interruption, it was my custom to begin writing at eight in the evening, and continue at work until six or seven o'clock the next morning. In three months I had written as far as the 393d page, in the American edition. The remaining seventy pages were not completed, in their published form, until about three years later, an extraordinary delay, which did not escape censure at the time, and into the causes of which I will not enter here.

The title of the story also underwent various vicissitudes. The one first chosen was "Happy Jack"; but that was objected to as suggesting, to an English ear at least, a species of cheap Jack or rambling peddler. The next title fixed upon was

“Luck”; but before this could be copyrighted, somebody published a story called “Luck, and What Came of It,” and thereby invalidated my briefer version. For several weeks, I was at a loss what to call it; but one evening, at a representation of “Romeo and Juliet,” I heard the exclamation of *Romeo*, “Oh, I am fortune’s fool!” and immediately appropriated it to my own needs. It suited the book well enough, in more ways than one.

CHAPTER II.

NOVELS AND AGNOSTICISM.

THE novel of our times is susceptible of many definitions. The American publishers of Railway libraries think that it is forty or fifty double-column pages of pirated English fiction. Readers of the "New York Ledger" suppose it to be a romance of angelic virtue at last triumphant over satanic villany. The aristocracy of culture describe it as a philosophic analysis of human character and motives, with an agnostic bias on the analyst's part. Schoolboys are under the impression that it is a tale of Western chivalry and Indian outrage — price, ten cents. Most of us agree in the belief that it should contain a brace or two of lovers, a suspense, and a solution.

To investigate the nature of the novel in the abstract would involve going back to the very origin of things. It would imply the recognition of a certain faculty of the mind, known as imagination; and of a certain fact in history, called art.

Art and imagination are correlatives,—one implies the other. Together, they may be said to constitute the characteristic badge and vindication of human nature; imagination is the badge, and art is the vindication. Reason, which gets so much vulgar glorification, is, after all, a secondary quality. It is posterior to imagination,—it is one of the means by which imagination seeks to realize its ends. Some animals reason, or seem to do so: but the most cultivated ape or donkey has not yet composed a sonnet, or a symphony, or “an arrangement in green and yellow.” Man still retains a few prerogatives, although, like *Æsop’s* stag, which despised the legs that bore it away from the hounds, and extolled the antlers that entangled it in the thicket,—so man often magnifies those elements of his nature that least deserve it.

But, before celebrating art and imagination, we should have a clear idea what those handsome terms mean. In the broadest sense, imagination is the cause of the effect we call progress. It marks all forms of human effort towards a better state of things. It embraces a perception of existing shortcomings, and an aspiration towards a loftier ideal. It is, in fact, a truly divine force

in man, reminding him of his heavenly origin, and stimulating him to rise again to the level whence he fell. For it has glimpses of the divine Image within or behind the material veil; and its constant impulse is to tear aside the veil and grasp the image. The world, let us say, is a gross and finite translation of an infinite and perfect Word; and imagination is the intuition of that perfection, born in the human heart, and destined forever to draw mankind into closer harmony with it.

In common speech, however, imagination is deprived of this broader significance, and is restricted to its relations with art. Art is not progress, though progress implies art. It differs from progress chiefly in disclaiming the practical element. You cannot apply a poem, a picture, or a strain of music, to material necessities; they are not food, clothing, or shelter. Only after these physical wants are assuaged, does art supervene. Its sphere is exclusively mental and moral. But this definition is not adequate; a further distinction is needed. For such things as mathematics, moral philosophy, and political economy also belong to the mental sphere, and yet they are not art. But these, though not actually existing on the plane of material necessities, yet do exist solely in order

to relieve such necessities. Unlike beauty, they are not their own excuse for being. Their embodiment is utilitarian, that of art is æsthetic. Political economy, for example, shows me how to buy two drinks for the same price I used to pay for one; while art inspires me to transmute a pewter mug into a Cellini goblet. My physical nature, perhaps, prefers two drinks to one; but, if my taste be educated, and I be not too thirsty, I would rather drink once from the Cellini goblet than twice from the mug. Political economy gravitates towards the material level; art seeks incarnation only in order to stimulate anew the same spiritual faculties that generated it. Art is the production, by means of appearances, of the illusion of a loftier reality; and imagination is the faculty which holds that loftier reality up for imitation.

The disposition of these preliminaries brings us once more in sight of the goal of our pilgrimage. The novel, despite its name, is no new thing, but an old friend in a modern dress. Ever since the time of Cadmus, — ever since language began to express thought as well as emotion, — men have betrayed the impulse to utter in forms of literary art, — in poetry and story, — their conceptions of

the world around them. According to many philologists, poetry was the original form of human speech. Be that as it may, whatever flows into the mind, from the spectacle of nature and of mankind, that influx the mind tends instinctively to reproduce, in a shape accordant with its peculiar bias and genius. And those minds in which imagination is predominant, impart to their reproductions a balance and beauty which stamp them as art. Art—and literary art especially—is the only evidence we have that this universal frame of things has relation to our minds, and is a universe and not a poliverse. Outside revelation, it is our best assurance of an intelligent purpose in creation.

Novels, then, instead of being (as some persons have supposed) a wilful and corrupt conspiracy on the part of the evilly disposed, against the peace and prosperity of the realm, may claim a most ancient and indefeasible right to existence. They, with their ancestors and near relatives, constitute Literature,—without which the human race would be little better than savages. For the effect of pure literature upon a receptive mind is something more than can be definitely stated. Like sunshine upon a landscape, it is a kind of miracle.

It demands from its disciple almost as much as it gives him, and is never revealed save to the disinterested and loving eye. In our best moments, it touches us most deeply; and when the sentiment of human brotherhood kindles most warmly within us, we discover in literature an exquisite answering ardor. When everything that can be, has been said about a true work of art, its finest charm remains, — the charm derived from a source beyond the conscious reach even of the artist.

The novel, then, must be pure literature; as much so as the poem. But poetry — now that the day of the broad Homeric epic is past, or temporarily eclipsed — appeals to a taste too exclusive and abstracted for the demands of modern readers. Its most accommodating metre fails to house our endless variety of mood and movement; it exacts from the student an exaltation above the customary level of thought and sentiment greater than he can readily afford. The poet of old used to clothe in the garb of verse his every observation on life and nature; but to-day he reserves for it only his most ideal and abstract conceptions. The merit of Cervantes is not so much that he laughed Spain's chivalry away, as that he heralded the modern novel of character and manners. It is the latest,

most pliable, most catholic solution of the old problem, — how to unfold man to himself. It improves on the old methods, while missing little of their excellence. No one can read a great novel without feeling that, from its outwardly prosaic pages, strains of genuine poetry have ever and anon reached his ears. It does not obtrude itself; it is not there for him who has not skill to listen for it: but for him who has ears, it is like the music of a bird, defining itself amidst the innumerable murmurs of the forest.

So, the ideal novel, conforming in every part to the behests of the imagination, should produce, by means of literary art, the illusion of a loftier reality. This excludes the photographic method of novel-writing. "That is a false effort in art," says Goethe, towards the close of his long and splendid career, "which, in giving reality to the appearance, goes so far as to leave in it nothing but the common, every-day actual." It is neither the actual, nor Chinese copies of the actual, that we demand of art. Were art merely the purveyor of such things, she might yield her crown to the camera and the stenographer; and divine imagination would degenerate into vulgar inventiveness. Imagination is incompatible with inventiveness, or

imitation. Imitation is death, imagination is life. Imitation is servitude, imagination is royalty. He who claims the name of artist must rise to that vision of a loftier reality — a more true because a more beautiful world — which only imagination can reveal. A truer world, — for the world of facts is not and cannot be true. It is barren, incoherent, misleading. But behind every fact there is a truth: and these truths are enlightening, unifying, creative. Fasten your hold upon them, and facts will become your servants instead of your tyrants. No charm of detail will be lost, no homely picturesque circumstance, no touch of human pathos or humor; but all hardness, rigidity, and finality will disappear, and your story will be not yours alone, but that of every one who feels and thinks. Spirit gives universality and meaning; but alas! for this new gospel of the auctioneer's catalogue, and the crackling of thorns under a pot. He who deals with facts only, deprives his work of gradation and distinction. One fact, considered in itself, has no less importance than any other; a lump of charcoal is as valuable as a diamond. But that is the philosophy of brute beasts and Digger Indians. A child, digging on the beach, may shape a heap of sand into a similitude

of Vesuvius ; but is it nothing that Vesuvius towers above the clouds, and overwhelms Pompeii ?

In proceeding from the general to the particular, —to the novel as it actually exists in England and America, —attention will be confined strictly to the contemporary outlook. The new generation of novelists (by which is intended not those merely living in this age, but those who actively belong to it) differ in at least one fundamental respect from the later representatives of the generation preceding them. Thackeray and Dickens did not deliberately concern themselves about a philosophy of life. With more or less complacency, more or less cynicism, they accepted the religious and social canons which had grown to be the commonplace of the first half of this century. They pictured men and women, not as affected by questions, but as affected by one another. The morality and immorality of their personages were of the old familiar Church-of-England sort ; there was no speculation as to whether what had been supposed to be wrong was really right, and *vice versa*. Such speculations, in various forms and degrees of energy, appear in the world periodically ; but the public conscience during the last

thirty or forty years had been gradually making itself comfortable after the disturbances consequent upon the French Revolution; the theoretical rights of man had been settled for the moment; and interest was directed no longer to the assertion and support of these rights, but to the social condition and character which were their outcome. Good people were those who climbed through reverses and sorrows towards the conventional heaven; bad people were those who, in spite of worldly and temporary successes and triumphs, gravitated towards the conventional hell. Novels designed on this basis in so far filled the bill, as the phrase is: their greater or less excellence depended solely on the veracity with which the aspect, the temperament, and the conduct of the *dramatis personæ* were reported, and upon the amount of ingenuity wherewith the web of events and circumstances was woven, and the conclusion reached. Nothing more was expected, and, in general, little or nothing more was attempted. Little more, certainly, will be found in the writings of Thackeray or of Balzac, who, it is commonly admitted, approach nearest to perfection of any novelists of their time. There was nothing genuine or commanding in the metaphysical dilettan-

teism of Bulwer: the philosophical speculations of Georges Sand are the least permanently interesting feature of her writings; and the same might in some measure be affirmed of George Eliot, whose gloomy wisdom finally confesses its inability to do more than advise us rather to bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of. As to Nathaniel Hawthorne, he cannot properly be instanced in this connection; for he analyzed chiefly those parts of human nature which remain substantially unaltered in the face of whatever changes of opinion, civilization, and religion. The truth that he brings to light is not the sensational fact of a fashion or a period, but a verity of the human heart, which may foretell, but can never be affected by, anything which that heart may conceive. In other words, Hawthorne belonged neither to this nor to any other generation of writers further than that his productions may be used as a test of the inner veracity of all the rest.

But of late years a new order of things has been coming into vogue, and the new novelists have been among the first to reflect it; and of these the Americans have shown themselves among the most susceptible. Science, or the investigation of the phenomena of existence (in opposition to phil-

osophy, the investigation of the phenomena of being), has proved nature to be so orderly and self-sufficient, and inquiry as to the origin of the primordial atom so unproductive and quixotic, as to make it convenient and indeed reasonable to accept nature as a self-existing fact, and to let all the rest — if rest there be — go. From this point of view, God and a future life retire into the background; not as finally disproved,—because denial, like affirmation, must, in order to be final, be logically supported; and spirit is, if not illogical, at any rate outside the domain of logic,—but as being a hopelessly vague and untrustworthy hypothesis. The Bible is a human book; Christ was a gentleman, related to the Buddha and Plato families; Joseph was an ill-used man; death, so far as we have any reason to believe, is annihilation of personal existence; life is — the predicament of the body previous to death; morality is the enlightened selfishness of the greatest number; civilization is the compromises men make with one another in order to get the most they can out of the world; wisdom is acknowledgment of these propositions; folly is to hanker after what may lie beyond the sphere of sense. The supporter of these doctrines by no means permits himself to be regarded as a

rampant and dogmatic atheist; he is simply the modest and humble doubter of what he cannot prove. He even recognizes the persistence of the religious instinct in man, and caters to it by a new religion suited to the times — the Religion of Humanity. Thus he is secure at all points: for if the religion of the Bible turn out to be true, his disappointment will be an agreeable one; and if it turns out false, he will not be disappointed at all. He is an agnostic — a person bound to be complacent whatever happens. He may indulge a gentle regret, a musing sadness, a smiling pensiveness; but he will never refuse a comfortable dinner, and always wear something soft next his skin, nor can he altogether avoid the consciousness of his intellectual superiority.

Agnosticism, which reaches forward into nihilism on one side, and extends back into liberal Christianity on the other, marks, at all events, a definite turning-point from what has been to what is to come. The human mind, in the course of its long journey, is passing through a dark place, and is, as it were, whistling to keep up its courage. It is a period of doubt: what it will result in remains to be seen; but analogy leads us to infer that this doubt, like all others, will be suc-

ceeded by a comparatively definite belief in something — no matter what. It is a transient state — the interval between one creed and another. The agnostic no longer holds to what is behind him, nor knows what lies before, so he contents himself with feeling the ground beneath his feet. That, at least, though the heavens fall, is likely to remain; meanwhile, let the heavens take care of themselves. It may be the part of valor to champion divine revelation, but the better part of valor is discretion, and if divine revelation prove true, discretion will be none the worse off. On the other hand, to champion a myth is to make one's self ridiculous, and of being ridiculous the agnostic has a consuming fear. From the superhuman disinterestedness of the theory of the Religion of Humanity, before which angels might quail, he flinches not, but when it comes to the risk of being laughed at by certain sagacious persons he confesses that bravery has its limits. He dares do all that may become an agnostic, — who dares do more is none.

But, however open to criticism this phase of thought may be, it is a genuine phase, and the proof is the alarm and the shifts that it has brought about in the opposite camp. "Estab-

lished" religion finds the foundation of her establishment undermined, and, like the lady in Hamlet's play, she doth protest too much. In another place, all manner of odd superstitions and quasi-miracles are cropping up and gaining credence, as if, since the immortality of the soul cannot be proved by logic, it should be smuggled into belief by fraud and violence—that is, by the testimony of the bodily senses themselves. Taking a comprehensive view of the whole field, therefore, it seems to be divided between discreet and supercilious skepticism on one side, and, on the other, the clamorous jugglery of charlatanism. The case is not really so bad as that: nihilists are not discreet and even the Bishop of Rome is not necessarily a charlatan. Nevertheless, the outlook may fairly be described as confused and the issue uncertain. And—to come without further preface to the subject of this paper—it is with this material that the modern novelist, so far as he is a modern and not a future novelist, or a novelist *temporis acti*, has to work. Unless a man have the gift to forecast the years, or, at least, to catch the first ray of the coming light, he can hardly do better than attend to what is under his nose. He may hesitate to identify him-

self with agnosticism, but he can scarcely avoid discussing it, either in itself or in its effects. He must entertain its problems; and the personages of his story, if they do not directly advocate or oppose agnostic views, must show in their lives either confirmation or disproof of agnostic principles. It is impossible, save at the cost of affectation or of ignorance, to escape from the spirit of the age. It is in the air we breathe, and, whether we are fully conscious thereof or not, our lives and thoughts must needs be tinctured by it.

Now, art is creative; but Mephistopheles, the spirit that denies, is destructive. A negative attitude of mind is not favorable for the production of works of art. The best periods of art have also been periods of spiritual or philosophical convictions. The more a man doubts, the more he disintegrates and the less he constructs. He has in him no central initial certainty round which all other matters of knowledge or investigation may group themselves in symmetrical relation. He may analyze to his heart's content, but must be wary of organizing. If creation is not of God, if nature is not the expression of the contact between an infinite and a finite being, then the universe and

everything in it are accidents, which might have been otherwise or might have not been at all; there is no design in them nor purpose, no divine and eternal significance. This being conceded, what meaning would there be in designing works of art? If art has not its prototype in creation, if all that we see and do is chance, uninspired by a controlling and forming intelligence behind or within it, then to construct a work of art would be to make something arbitrary and grotesque, something unreal and fugitive, something out of accord with the general sense (or nonsense) of things, something with no further basis or warrant than is supplied by the maker's idle and irresponsible fancy. But since no man cares to expend the trained energies of his mind upon the manufacture of toys, it will come to pass (upon the accidental hypothesis of creation) that artists will become shy of justifying their own title. They will adopt the scientific method of merely collecting and describing phenomena; but the phenomena will no longer be arranged as parts or developments of a central controlling idea, because such an arrangement would no longer seem to be founded on the truth: the gratification which it gives to the mind would be deemed illu-

sory, the result of tradition and prejudice; or, in other words, what is true being found no longer consistent with what we have been accustomed to call beauty, the latter would cease to be an object of desire, though something widely alien to it might usurp its name. If beauty be devoid of independent right to be, and definable only as an attribute of truth, then undoubtedly the cynosure to-day may be the scarecrow of to-morrow, and *vice versâ*, according to our varying conception of what truth is.

And, as a matter of fact, art already shows the effects of the agnostic influence. Artists have begun to doubt whether their old conceptions of beauty be not fanciful and silly. They betray a tendency to eschew the loftier flights of the imagination, and confine themselves to what they call facts. Critics deprecate idealism as something fit only for children, and extol the courage of seeing and representing things as they are. Sculpture is either a stern student of modern trousers and coat-tails or a vapid imitator of classic prototypes. Painters try all manner of experiments, and shrink from painting beneath the surface of their canvas. Much of recent effort in the different branches of art comes to us in the form of "studies," but the

complete work still delays to be born. We would not so much mind having our old idols and criterions done away with, were something new and better, or as good, substituted for them. But apparently nothing definite has yet been decided on. Doubt still reigns, and, once more, doubt is not creative. One of two things must presently happen. The time will come when we must stop saying that we do not know whether or not God, and all that God implies, exists, and affirm definitely and finally either that he does not exist or that he does. That settled, we shall soon see what will become of art. If there is a God, he will be understood and worshipped, not superstitiously and literally as heretofore, but in a new and enlightened spirit; and an art will arise commensurate with this new and loftier revelation. If there is no God, it is difficult to see how art can have the face to show herself any more. There is no place for her in the Religion of Humanity; to be true and living she can be nothing which it has thus far entered into the heart of man to call beautiful; and she could only serve to remind us of certain vague longings and aspirations now proved to be as false as they were vain. Art is not an orchid: it cannot grow in the air. Unless

its root can be traced as deep down as Yggdrasil, it will wither and vanish, and be forgotten as it ought to be; and as for the cowslip by the river's brim, a yellow cowslip it shall be, and nothing more; and the light that never was on sea or land shall be permanently extinguished, in the interests of common sense and economy, and (what is least inviting of all to the unregenerate mind) we shall speedily get rid of the notion that we have lost anything worth preserving.

This, however, is only what may be, and our concern at present is with things as they are. It has been observed that American writers have shown themselves more susceptible of the new influences than most others, partly no doubt from a natural sensitiveness of organization, but in some measure also because there are with us no ruts and fetters of old tradition from which we must emancipate ourselves before adopting anything new. We have no past, in the European sense, and so are ready for whatever the present or the future may have to suggest. Nevertheless, the novelist who, in a larger degree than any other, seems to be the literary parent of our own best men of fiction, is himself not an American, nor even an Englishman, but a Russian — Turgué-

nieff. His series of extraordinary novels, translated into English and French, is altogether the most important fact in the literature of fiction of the last twelve years. To read his books you would scarcely imagine that their author could have had any knowledge of the work of his predecessors in the same field. Originality is a term indiscriminately applied, and generally of trifling significance, but so far as any writer may be original, Turguénieff is so. He is no less original in the general scheme and treatment of his stories than in their details. Whatever he produces has the air of being the outcome of his personal experience and observation. He even describes his characters, their aspect, features, and ruling traits, in a novel and memorable manner. He seizes on them from a new point of vantage, and uses scarcely any of the hackneyed and conventional devices for bringing his portraits before our minds; yet no writer, not even Carlyle, has been more vivid, graphic, and illuminating than he. Here are eyes that owe nothing to other eyes, but examine and record for themselves. Having once taken up a character he never loses his grasp on it: on the contrary, he masters it more and more, and only lets go of it when the last recesses of its

organism have been explored. In the quality and conduct of his plots he is equally unprecedented. His scenes are modern, and embody characteristic events and problems in the recent history of Russia. There is in their arrangement no attempt at symmetry, nor poetic justice. Temperament and circumstances are made to rule, and against their merciless fiat no appeal is allowed. Evil does evil to the end; weakness never gathers strength; even goodness never varies from its level: it suffers, but is not corrupted; it is the goodness of instinct, not of struggle and aspiration; it happens to belong to this or that person, just as his hair happens to be black or brown. Everything in the surroundings and the action is to the last degree matter-of-fact, commonplace, inevitable; there are no picturesque coincidences, no providential interferences, no desperate victories over fate; the tale, like the world of the materialist, moves onward from a predetermined beginning to a helpless and tragic close. And yet few books have been written of deeper and more permanent fascination than these. Their grim veracity; the creative sympathy and steady dispassionateness of their portrayal of mankind; their constancy of motive, and their sombre earnestness, have been

surpassed by none. This earnestness is worth dwelling upon for a moment. It bears no likeness to the dogmatism of the bigot or the fanaticism of the enthusiast. It is the concentration of a broadly gifted masculine mind, devoting its unstinted energies to depicting certain aspects of society and civilization, which are powerfully representative of the tendencies of the day. "Here is the unvarnished fact—give heed to it!" is the unwritten motto. The author avoids betraying, either explicitly or implicitly, the tendency of his own sympathies; not because he fears to have them known, but because he holds it to be his office simply to portray, and to leave judgment thereupon where, in any case, it must ultimately rest—with the world of his readers. He tells us what is; it is for us to consider whether it also must be and shall be. Turguénieff is an artist by nature, yet his books are not intentionally works of art; they are fragments of history, differing from real life only in presenting such persons and events as are commandingly and exhaustively typical, and excluding all others. This faculty of selection is one of the highest artistic faculties, and it appears as much in the minor as in the major features of the narrative. It indicates that

Turguénieff might, if he chose, produce a story as faultlessly symmetrical as was ever framed. Why, then, does he not so choose? The reason can only be that he deems the truth-seeming of his narrative would thereby be impaired. "He is only telling a story," the reader would say, "and he shapes the events and persons so as to fit the plot." But is this reason reasonable? To those who believe that God has no hand in the ordering of human affairs, it undoubtedly is reasonable. To those who believe the contrary, however, it appears as if the story of no human life or complex of lives could be otherwise than a rounded and perfect work of art — provided only that the spectator takes note, not merely of the superficial accidents and appearances, but also of the underlying divine purpose and significance. The absence of this recognition in Turguénieff's novels is the explanation of them: holding the creed their author does, he could not have written them otherwise; and, on the other hand, had his creed been different, he very likely would not have written novels at all.

The pioneer, in whatever field of thought or activity, is apt to be also the most distinguished figure therein. The consciousness of being the first

augments the keenness of his impressions, and a mind that can see and report in advance of others a new order of things may claim a finer organization than the ordinary. The vitality of nature animates him who has insight to discern her at first hand, whereas his followers miss the freshness of the morning, because, instead of discovering, they must be content to illustrate and refine. Those of our writers who betray Turguénieff's influence are possibly his superiors in finish and culture, but their faculty of convincing and presenting is less. Their interest in their own work seems less serious than his; they may entertain us more, but they do not move and magnetize so much. The persons and events of their stories are conscientiously studied, and are nothing if not natural; but they lack distinction. In an epitome of life so concise as the longest novel must needs be, to use any but types is waste of time and space. A typical character is one who combines the traits or beliefs of a certain class to which he is affiliated — who is, practically, all of them and himself besides; and, when we know him, there is nothing left worth knowing about the others. In Shakespeare's Hamlet and Enobarbus, in Fielding's Squire Western, in Walter Scott's

Edie Ochiltree and Meg Merrilies, in Balzac's *Père Goriot* and Madame Marneff, in Thackeray's *Colonel Newcome* and Becky Sharp, in Turgué-nieff's *Bazarof* and Dimitri Roudine, we meet persons who exhaust for us the groups to which they severally belong. *Bazarof*, the nihilist, for instance, reveals to us the motives and influences that have made nihilism, so that we feel that nothing essential on that score remains to be learnt.

The ability to recognize and select types is a test of a novelist's talent and experience. It implies energy to rise above the blind walls of one's private circle of acquaintance; the power to perceive what phases of thought and existence are to be represented as well as who represents them; the sagacity to analyze the age or the moment and reproduce its dominant features. The feat is difficult, and, when done, by no means blows its own trumpet. On the contrary, the reader must open his eyes to be aware of it. He finds the story clear and easy of comprehension; the characters come home to him familiarly and remain distinctly in his memory; he understands something which was, till now, vague to him: but he is as likely to ascribe this to an exceptional lucidity in his own mental condition

as to any special merit in the author. Indeed, it often happens that the author who puts out-of-the-way personages into his stories — characters that represent nothing but themselves, or possibly some eccentricity of invention on their author's part, will gain the latter a reputation for cleverness higher than his fellow's who portrays mankind in its masses as well as in its details. But the finest imagination is not that which evolves strange images, but that which explains seeming contradictions, and reveals the unity within the difference and the harmony beneath the discord.

Were we to compare our fictitious literature, as a whole, with that of England, the balance must be immeasurably on the English side. Even confining ourselves to to-day, and to the prospect of to-morrow, it must be conceded that, in settled method, in guiding tradition, in training and associations both personal and inherited, the average English novelist is better circumstanced than the American. Nevertheless, the English novelist is not at present writing better novels than the American. The reason seems to be that he uses no material which has not been in use for hundreds of years; and to say that such material

begins to lose its freshness is not putting the case too strongly. He has not been able to detach himself from the paralyzing background of English conventionality. The vein was rich, but it is worn out; and the half-dozen pioneers had all the luck.

There is no commanding individual imagination in England — nor, to say the truth, does there seem to be any in America. But we have what they have not — a national imaginative tendency. There are no fetters upon our fancy; and, however deeply our real estate may be mortgaged, there is freedom for our ideas. England has not yet appreciated the true inwardness of a favorite phrase of ours, — a new deal. And yet she is tired to death of her own stale stories; and when, by chance, any one of her writers happens to chirp out a note a shade different from the prevailing key, the whole nation pounces down upon him, with a shriek of half-incredulous joy, and buys him up, at the rate of a million copies a year. Our own best writers are more read in England, or, at any rate, more talked about, than their native crop; not so much, perhaps, because they are different as because their difference is felt to be of a significant and typical kind. It

has in it a gleam of the new day. They are realistic ; but realism, so far as it involves a faithful study of nature, is useful. The illusion of a loftier reality, at which we should aim, must be evolved from adequate knowledge of reality itself. The spontaneous and assured faith, which is the mainspring of sane imagination, must be preceded by the doubt and rejection of what is lifeless and insincere. We desire no resurrection of the Ann Radclyffe type of romance : but the true alternative to this is not such a mixture of the police gazette and the medical reporter as Émile Zola offers us. So far as Zola is conscientious, let him live ; but, in so far as he is revolting, let him die. Many things in the world seem ugly and purposeless ; but to a deeper intelligence than ours, they are a part of beauty and design. What is ugly and irrelevant, can never enter, as such, into a work of art ; because the artist is bound, by a sacred obligation, to show us the complete curve only, — never the undeveloped fragments.

But were the firmament of England still illuminated with her Dickenses, her Thackerays, and her Brontës, I should still hold our state to be fuller of promise than hers. It may be ad-

mitted that almost everything was against our producing anything good in literature. Our men, in the first place, had to write for nothing; because the publisher, who can steal a readable English novel, will not pay for an American novel, for the mere patriotic gratification of enabling its American author to write it. In the second place, they had nothing to write about, for the national life was too crude and heterogeneous for ordinary artistic purposes. Thirdly, they had no one to write for: because, although, in one sense, there might be readers enough, in a higher sense there were scarcely any, — that is to say, there was no organized critical body of literary opinion, from which an author could confidently look to receive his just meed of encouragement and praise. Yet, in spite of all this, and not to mention honored names that have ceased or are ceasing to cast their living weight into the scale, we are contributing much that is fresh and original, and something, it may be, that is of permanent value, to literature. We have accepted the situation; and, since no straw has been vouchsafed us to make our bricks with, we are trying manfully to make them without.

It will not be necessary, however, to call

the roll of all the able and popular gentlemen who are contending in the forlorn hope against disheartening odds; and as for the ladies who have honored our literature by their contributions, it will perhaps be well to adopt regarding them a course analogous to that which Napoleon is said to have pursued with the letters sent to him while in Italy. He left them unread until a certain time had elapsed, and then found that most of them no longer needed attention. We are thus brought face to face with the two men with whom every critic of American novelists has to reckon; who represent what is carefullest and newest in American fiction; and it remains to inquire how far their work has been moulded by the skeptical or radical spirit of which Turguénieff is the chief exemplar.

The author of "Daisy Miller" had been writing for several years before the bearings of his course could be confidently calculated. Some of his earlier tales,—as, for example, "The Madonna of the Future,"—while keeping near reality on one side, are on the other eminently fanciful and ideal. He seemed to feel the attraction of fairyland, but to lack resolution to swallow it whole; so, instead of idealizing both persons and plot, as

Hawthorne had ventured to do, he tried to persuade real persons to work out an ideal destiny. But the tact, delicacy, and reticence with which these attempts were made did not blind him to the essential incongruity ; either realism or idealism had to go, and step by step he dismissed the latter, until at length Turguénieff's current caught him. By this time, however, his culture had become too wide, and his independent views too confirmed, to admit of his yielding unconditionally to the great Russian. Especially his critical familiarity with French literature operated to broaden, if at the same time to render less trenchant, his method and expression. His characters are drawn with fastidious care, and closely follow the tones and fashions of real life. Each utterance is so exactly like what it ought to be that the reader feels the same sort of pleased surprise as is afforded by a phonograph which repeats, with all the accidental pauses and inflections, the speech spoken into it. Yet the words come through a medium ; they are not quite spontaneous ; these figures have not the sad, human inevitableness of Turguénieff's people. The reason seems to be (leaving the difference between the genius of the two writers out of account) that

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the American, unlike the Russian, recognizes no tragic importance in the situation. To the latter, the vision of life is so ominous that his voice waxes sonorous and terrible; his eyes, made keen by foreboding, see the leading elements of the conflict, and them only; he is no idle singer of an empty day, but he speaks because speech springs out of him. To his mind, the foundations of human welfare are in jeopardy, and it is full time to decide what means may avert the danger. But the American does not think any cataclysm is impending, or if any there be, nobody can help it. The subjects that best repay attention are the minor ones of civilization, culture, behavior; how to avoid certain vulgarities and follies, how to inculcate certain principles: and to illustrate these points heroic types are not needed. In other words, the situation being unheroic, so must the actors be; for, apart from the inspirations of circumstances, Napoleon no more than John Smith is recognizable as a hero.

Now, in adopting this view, a writer places himself under several manifest disadvantages. If you are to be an agnostic, it is better (for novel-writing purposes) not to be a complacent or resigned one. Otherwise your characters will find

it difficult to show what is in them. A man reveals and classifies himself in proportion to the severity of the condition or action required of him; hence the American novelist's people are in considerable straits to make themselves adequately known to us. They cannot lay bare their inmost soul over a cup of tea or a picture by Corô't; so, in order to explain themselves, they must not only submit to dissection at the author's hands, but must also devote no little time and ingenuity to dissecting themselves and one another. But dissection is one thing, and the living word rank from the heart and absolutely reeking of the human creature that uttered it — the word that Turguénieff's people are constantly uttering — is another. Moreover, in the dearth of commanding traits and stirring events, there is a continual temptation to magnify those which are petty and insignificant. Instead of a telescope to sweep the heavens, we are furnished with a microscope to detect infusoria. We want a description of a mountain; and, instead of receiving an outline, naked and severe, perhaps, but true and impressive, we are introduced to a tiny field on its immeasurable side, and we go botanizing and insect-hunting there. This is realism; but it is

the realism of texture, not of form and relation. It encourages our glance to be near-sighted instead of comprehensive. Above all, there is a misgiving that we do not touch the writer's true quality, and that these scenes of his, so elaborately and conscientiously prepared, have cost him much thought and pains, but not one throb of the heart or throe of the spirit. The experiences that he depicts have not, one fancies, marked wrinkles on his forehead or turned his hair gray. There are two kinds of reserve—the reserve which feels that its message is too mighty for it, and the reserve which feels that it is too mighty for its message. Our new school of writers is reserved, but its reserve does not strike one as being of the former kind. It cannot be said of any one of Mr. James's stories, "This is his best," or "This is his worst," because no one of them is all one way. They have their phases of strength and veracity, and, also, phases that are neither veracious nor strong. The cause may either lie in a lack of experience in a certain direction on the writer's part; or else in his reluctance to write up to the experience he has. The experience in question is not of the ways of the world,—concerning which Mr. James

has every sign of being politely familiar,—nor of men and women in their every-day aspect; still less of literary ways and means, for of these, in his own line, he is a master. The experience referred to is experience of passion. If Mr. James be not incapable of describing passion, at all events he has still to show that he is capable of it. He has introduced us to many characters that seem to have in them capacity for the highest passion,—as witness Christina Light,—and yet he has never allowed them an opportunity to develop it. He seems to evade the situation; but the evasion is managed with so much plausibility that, although we may be disappointed, or even irritated, and feel, more or less vaguely, that we have been unfairly dealt with, we are unable to show exactly where or how the unfairness comes in. Thus his novels might be compared to a beautiful face, full of culture and good breeding, but lacking that fire of the eye and fashion of the lip that betray a living human soul.

The other one of the two writers whose names are so often mentioned together, seems to have taken up the subject of our domestic and social pathology; and the minute care and conscientious

veracity which he has brought to bear upon his work has not been surpassed, even by Shakespeare. But, if I could venture a criticism upon his productions, it would be to the effect that there is not enough fiction in them. They are elaborate and amiable reports of what we see around us. They are not exactly imaginative, -- in the sense in which I have attempted to define the word. There are two ways of warning a man against unwholesome life -- one is, to show him a picture of disease; the other is, to show him a picture of health. The former is the negative, the latter the positive treatment. Both have their merits; but the latter is, perhaps, the better adapted to novels, the former to essays. A novelist should not only know what he has got; he should also know what he wants. His mind should have an active, or theorizing, as well as a passive, or contemplative, side. He should have energy to discount the people he personally knows; the power to perceive what phases of thought are to be represented, as well as to describe the persons who happen to be their least inadequate representatives; the sagacity to analyze the age or the moment, and to reveal its tendency and meaning. Mr. Howells

has produced a great deal of finely wrought tapestry ; but does not seem, as yet, to have found a hall fit to adorn it with.

And yet Mr. James and Mr. Howells have done more than all the rest of us to make our literature respectable during the last ten years. If texture be the object, they have brought texture to a fineness never surpassed anywhere. They have discovered charm and grace in much that was only blank before. They have detected and described points of human nature hitherto unnoticed, which, if not intrinsically important, will one day be made auxiliary to the production of pictures of broader as well as minuter veracity than have heretofore been produced. All that seems wanting thus far is a direction, an aim, a belief. Agnosticism has brought about a pause for a while, and no doubt a pause is preferable to some kinds of activity. It may enable us, when the time comes to set forward again, to do so with better equipment and more intelligent purpose. It will not do to be always at a prophetic heat of enthusiasm, sympathy, denunciation : the coolly critical mood is also useful to prune extravagance and promote a sense of responsibility. The novels of Mr. James and of Mr. Howells have taught us that

men and women are creatures of infinitely complicated structure, and that even the least of these complications, if it is portrayed at all, is worth portraying truthfully. But we cannot forget, on the other hand, that honest emotion and hearty action are necessary to the wholesomeness of society, because in their absence society is afflicted with a lamentable sameness and triviality; the old primitive impulses remain, but the food on which they are compelled to feed is insipid and unsustaining; our eyes are turned inward instead of outward, and each one of us becomes himself the Rome towards which all his roads lead. Such books as these authors have written are not the Great American Novel, because they take life and humanity not in their loftier, but in their lesser manifestations. They are the side scenes and the background of a story that has yet to be written. That story will have the interest not only of the collision of private passions and efforts, but of the great ideas and principles which characterize and animate a nation. It will discriminate between what is accidental and what is permanent, between what is realistic and what is real, between what is sentimental and what is sentiment. It will show us not only what we are, but what we

are to be ; not only what to avoid, but what to do. It will rest neither in the tragic gloom of Turguénieff, nor in the critical composure of James, nor in the gentle deprecation of Howells, but will demonstrate that the weakness of man is the motive and condition of his strength. It will not shrink from romance, nor from ideality, nor from artistic completeness, because it will know at what depths and heights of life these elements are truly operative. It will be American, not because its scene is laid or its characters born in the United States, but because its burden will be reaction against old tyrannies and exposure of new hypocrisies ; a refutation of respectable falsehoods, and a proclamation of unsophisticated truths. Indeed, let us take heed and diligently improve our native talent, lest a day come when the Great American Novel make its appearance, but written in a foreign language, and by some author who — however purely American at heart — never set foot on the shores of the Republic.

CHAPTER III.

AMERICANISM IN FICTION.

CONTEMPORARY criticism will have it that, in order to create an American Literature, we must use American materials. The term "Literature" has, no doubt, come to be employed in a loose sense. The London *Saturday Review* has (or used to have until lately) a monthly two-column article devoted to what it called "American Literature," three-fourths of which were devoted to an examination of volumes of State Histories, Statistical Digests, Records of the Census, and other such works as were never, before or since, suspected of being literature; while the remaining fourth mentioned the titles (occasionally with a line of comment) of whatever productions were at hand in the way of essays, novels, and poetry. This would seem to indicate that we may have — nay, are already possessed of — an American Literature, composed of American materials, provided only that we consent to adopt the *Saturday Review's* conception of what literature is.

Many of us believe, however, that the essays, the novels, and the poetry, as well as the statistical digests, ought to go to the making up of a national literature. It has been discovered, however, that the existence of the former does not depend, to the same extent as that of the latter, upon the employment of exclusively American material. A book about the census, if it be not American, is nothing; but a poem or a romance, though written by a native-born American, who, perhaps, has never crossed the Atlantic, not only may, but frequently does, have nothing in it that can be called essentially American, except its English and, occasionally, its ideas. And the question arises whether such productions can justly be held to form component parts of what shall hereafter be recognized as the literature of America.

How was it with the makers of English literature? Beginning with Chaucer, his "Canterbury Pilgrims" is English, both in scene and character; it is even mentioned of the Abbess that "Frenche of Paris was to her unknowe"; but his "Legende of Goode Women" might, so far as its subject-matter is concerned, have been written by a French, a Spanish, or an Italian Chaucer, just as well as by the British Daniel. Spenser's "Faërie

Queene" numbers St. George and King Arthur among its heroes; but its scene is laid in Faërie Lande, if it be laid anywhere, and it is a bare-faced moral allegory throughout. Shakespeare wrote thirty-seven plays, the elimination of which from English literature would undeniably be a serious loss to it; yet, of these plays twenty-three have entirely foreign scenes and characters. Milton, as a political writer, was English; but his "Paradise Lost and Regained," his "Samson," his "Ode on the Nativity," his "Comus," bear no reference to the land of his birth. Dryden's best-known work to-day is his "Alexander's Feast." Pope has come down to us as the translator of Homer. Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne are the great quartet of English novelists of the last century; but Smollett, in his preface to "Roderick Random," after an admiring allusion to the "Gil Blas" of Le Sage, goes on to say: "The following sheets I have modelled on his plan"; and Sterne was always talking and thinking about Cervantes, and comparing himself to the great Spaniard: "I think there is more laughable humor, with an equal degree of Cervantic satire, if not more, than in the last," he writes of one of his chapters, to "my witty widow, Mrs. F."

Many even of Walter Scott's romances are un-English in their elements; and the fame of Shelley, Keats, and Byron rests entirely upon their "foreign" work. Coleridge's poetry and philosophy bear no technical stamp of nationality; and, to come down to later times, Carlyle was profoundly imbued with Germanism, while the "Romola" of George Eliot and the "Cloister and the Hearth" of Charles Reade are by many considered to be the best of their works. In the above enumeration innumerable instances in point are, of course, omitted; but enough have been given, perhaps, to show that imaginative writers have not generally been disowned by their country on the ground that they have availed themselves, in their writings, of other scenes and characters than those of their own immediate neighborhoods.

The statistics of the work of the foremost American writers could easily be shown to be much more strongly imbued with the specific flavor of their environment. Benjamin Franklin, though he was an author before the United States existed, was American to the marrow. The "Leather-Stocking Tales" of Cooper are the American epic. Irving's "Knickerbocker" and

his "Woolfert's Roost" will long outlast his other productions. Poe's most popular tale, "The Gold-Bug," is American in its scene, and so is "The Mystery of Marie Roget," in spite of its French nomenclature; and all that he wrote is strongly tinged with the native hue of his strange genius. Longfellow's "Evangeline" and "Hiawatha" and "Miles Standish," and such poems as "The Skelton in Armor" and "The Building of the Ship," crowd out of sight his graceful translations and adaptations. Emerson is the veritable American eagle of our literature, so that to be Emersonian is to be American. Whittier and Holmes have never looked beyond their native boundaries, and Hawthorne has brought the stern gloom of the Puritan period and the uneasy theorizings of the present day into harmony with the universal and permanent elements of human nature. There was certainly nothing European visible in the crude but vigorous stories of Theodore Winthrop; and Bret Harte, the most brilliant figure among our later men, is not only American, but Californian, — as is, likewise, the Poet of the Sierras. It is not necessary to go any further. Mr. Henry James, having enjoyed early and singular opportunities of studying the effects of the recent an-

nual influx of Americans, cultured and otherwise, into England and the Continent, has very sensibly and effectively, and with exquisite grace of style and pleasantness of thought, made the phenomenon the theme of a remarkable series of stories. Hereupon the cry of an "International School" has been raised, and critics profess to be seriously alarmed lest we should ignore the signal advantages for *mise-en-scène* presented by this Western half of the planet, and should enter into vain and unpatriotic competition with foreign writers on their own ground. The truth is, meanwhile, that it would have been a much surer sign of affectation in us to have abstained from literary comment upon the patent and notable fact of this international *rapprochement*, — which is just as characteristic an American trait as the episode of the Argonauts of 1849, — and we have every reason to be grateful to Mr. Henry James, and to his school, if he has any, for having rescued us from the opprobrium of so foolish a piece of know-nothingism. The phase is, of course, merely temporary; its interest and significance will presently be exhausted; but, because we are American, are we to import no French cakes and English ale? As a matter of fact, we are too timid and self-

conscious; and these infirmities imply a much more serious obstacle to the formation of a characteristic literature than does any amount of gadding abroad.

That must be a very shallow literature which depends for its national flavor and character upon its topography and its dialect; and the criticism which can conceive of no deeper Americanism than this is shallower still. What is an American book? It is a book written by an American, and by one who writes as an American; that is, unaffectedly. So an English book is a book written by an unaffected Englishman. What difference can it make what the subject of the writing is? Mr. Henry James lately brought out a volume of essays on "French Poets and Novelists." Mr. E. C. Stedman recently published a series of monographs on "The Victorian Poets." Are these books French and English, or are they non-descript, or are they American? Not only are they American, but they are more essentially American than if they had been disquisitions upon American literature. And the reason is, of course, that they subject the things of the old world to the tests of the new, and thereby vindicate and illustrate the characteristic mission of

America to mankind. We are here to hold up European conventionalisms and prejudices in the light of the new day, and thus afford everybody the opportunity, never heretofore enjoyed, of judging them by other standards, and in other surroundings than those amidst which they came into existence. In the same way, Emerson's "English Traits" is an American thing, and it gives categorical reasons why American things should be. And what is an American novel except a novel treating of persons, places, and ideas from an American point of view? The point of view is *the* point, not the thing seen from it.

But it is said that "the great American novel," in order fully to deserve its name, ought to have American scenery. Some thousands of years ago, the Greeks had a novelist—Homer—who evolved the great novel of that epoch; but the scenery of that novel was Trojan, not Greek. The story is a criticism, from a Greek standpoint, of foreign affairs, illustrated with practical examples; and, as regards treatment, quite as much care is bestowed upon the delineation of Hector, Priam, and Paris, as upon Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Achilles. The same story, told by a Trojan

Homer, would doubtless have been very different; but it is by no means certain that it would have been any better told. It embodies, whether symbolically or literally matters not, the triumph of Greek ideas and civilization. But, even so, the sympathies of the reader are not always, or perhaps uniformly, on the conquering side. Homer was doubtless a patriot, but he shows no signs of having been a bigot. He described that great international episode with singular impartiality; what chiefly interested him was the play of human nature. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the Greeks were backward in admitting his claims as their national poet; and we may legitimately conclude that were an American Homer — whether in prose or poetry — to appear among us, he might pitch his scene where he liked — in Patagonia, or on the banks of the Zambezi — and we should accept the situation with perfect equanimity. Only let him be a native of New York, or Boston, or San Francisco, or Mullenville, and be inspired with the American idea, and we ask no more. Whatever he writes will belong to our literature, and add lustre to it.

One hears many complaints about the snobbishness of running after things European. Go West,

young man, these moralists say, or go down Fifth Avenue, and investigate Chatham Street, and learn that all the elements of romance, to him who has the seeing eye, lie around your own front doorstep and back yard. But let not these persons forget that he who fears Europe is a less respectable snob than he who studies it. Let us welcome Europe in our books as freely as we do at Castle Garden; we may do so safely. If our digestion be not strong enough to assimilate her, and work up whatever is valuable in her into our own bone and sinew, then America is not the thing we took her for. For what is America? Is it simply a reproduction of one of these Eastern nationalities, which we are so fond of alluding to as effete? Surely not. It is a new departure in history; it is a new door opened to the development of the human race, or, as I should prefer to say, of humanity. We are misled by the chatter of politicians and the bombast of Congress. In the course of ages, the time has at last arrived when man, all over this planet, is entering upon a new career of moral, intellectual, and political emancipation; and America is the concrete expression and theatre of that great fact, as all spiritual truths find their fitting and representa-

tive physical incarnation. But what would this huge western continent be, if America — the real America of the mind — had no existence? It would be a body without a soul, and would better, therefore, not be at all. If America is to be a repetition of Europe on a larger scale, it is not worth the pain of governing it. Europe has shown what European ideas can accomplish; and whatever fresh thought or impulse comes to birth in it can be nothing else than an American thought and impulse, and must sooner or later find its way here, and become naturalized with its brethren. Buds and blossoms of America are sprouting forth all over the Old World, and we gather in the fruit. They do not find themselves at home there, but they know where their home is. The old country feels them like thorns in her old flesh, and is gladly rid of them; but such prickings are the only wholesome and hopeful symptoms she presents; if they ceased to trouble her, she would be dead indeed. She has an uneasy experience before her, for a time; but the time will come when she, too, will understand that her ease is her disease, and then Castle Garden may close its doors, for America will be everywhere.

If, then, America is something vastly more than has hitherto been understood by the word nation, it is proper that we attach to that other word, patriotism, a significance broader and loftier than has been conceived till now. By so much as the idea that we represent is great, by so much are we, in comparison with it, inevitably chargeable with littleness and short-comings. For we are of the same flesh and blood as our neighbors ; it is only our opportunities and our responsibilities that are fairer and weightier than theirs. Circumstances afford every excuse to them, but none to us. "*E Pluribus Unum*" is a frivolous motto ; our true one should be, "*Noblesse oblige*." But, with a strange perversity, in all matters of comparison between ourselves and others, we display what we are pleased to call our patriotism by an absurd touchiness as to points wherein Europe, with its settled and polished civilization, must needs be our superior ; and are quite indifferent about those things by which our real strength is constituted. Can we not be content to learn from Europe the graces, the refinements, the amenities of life, so long as we are able to teach her life itself ? For my part, I never saw in England any appurtenance of civilization, calculated to add to

the convenience and commodiousness of existence, that did not seem to me to surpass anything of the kind that we have in this country. Notwithstanding which — and I am far, indeed, from having any pretensions to asceticism — I would have been fairly stifled at the idea of having to spend my life there. No American can live in Europe, unless he means to return home, or unless, at any rate, he returns here in mind, in hope, in belief. For an American to accept England, or any other country, as both a mental and physical finality, would, it seems to me, be tantamount to renouncing his very life. To enjoy English comforts at the cost of adopting English opinions, would be about as pleasant as to have the privilege of retaining one's body on condition of surrendering one's soul, and would, indeed, amount to just about the same thing.

I fail, therefore, to feel any apprehension as to our literature becoming Europeanized, because whatever is American in it must lie deeper than anything European can penetrate. More than that, I believe and hope that our novelists will deal with Europe a great deal more, and a great deal more intelligently, than they have done yet. It is a true and healthy artistic instinct that leads

them to do so. Hawthorne — and no American writer had a better right than he to contradict his own argument — says, in the preface to the “Marble Faun,” in a passage that has been often quoted, but will bear repetition : —

“Italy, as the site of a romance, was chiefly valuable to him as affording a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted on as they are, and must needs be, in America. No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance writers may find congenial and easily handled themes, either in the annals of our stalwart Republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need ruin to make them grow.”

Now, what is to be understood from this passage? It assumes, in the first place, that a work of art, in order to be effective, must contain profound contrasts of light and shadow; and then it points out that the shadow, at least, is found ready to the hand in Europe. There is no hint of patriotic scruples as to availing one's self of such a “picturesque and gloomy” background; if it is to be had, then let it be taken; the main object to be considered is the work of art. Europe, in

short, afforded an excellent quarry, from which, in Hawthorne's opinion, the American novelist might obtain materials which are conspicuously deficient in his own country, and which that country is all the better for not possessing. In the "Marble Faun" the author had conceived a certain idea, and he considered that he had been not unsuccessful in realizing it. The subject was new, and full of especial attractions to his genius, and it would manifestly have been impossible to adapt it to an American setting. There was one drawback connected with it, and this Hawthorne did not fail to recognize. He remarks in the preface that he had "lived too long abroad not to be aware that a foreigner seldom acquires that knowledge of a country at once flexible and profound, which may justify him in endeavoring to idealize its traits." But he was careful not to attempt "a portraiture of Italian manners and character." He made use of the Italian scenery and atmosphere just so far as was essential to the development of his idea, and consistent with the extent of his Italian knowledge; and, for the rest, fell back upon American characters and principles. The result has been long enough before the world to have met with a proper appreciation. I have

heard regret expressed that the power employed by the author in working out this story had not been applied to a romance dealing with a purely American subject. But to analyze this objection is to dispose of it. A man of genius is not, commonly, enfeebled by his own productions; and, physical accidents aside, Hawthorne was just as capable of writing another "Scarlet Letter" after the "Marble Faun" was published, as he had been before. Meanwhile, few will deny that our literature would be a loser had the "Marble Faun" never been written.

The drawback above alluded to is, however, not to be underrated. It may operate in two ways. In the first place, the American's European observations may be inaccurate. As a child, looking at a sphere, might suppose it to be a flat disc, shaded at one side and lighted at the other, so a sight-seer in Europe may ascribe to what he beholds qualities and a character quite at variance with what a more fundamental knowledge would have enabled him to perceive. In the second place, the stranger in a strange land, be he as accurate as he may, will always tend to look at what is around him objectively, instead of allowing it subjectively — or, as it were, unconsciously — to color his nar-

rative. He will be more apt directly to describe what he sees, than to convey the feeling or aroma of it without description. It would doubtless, for instance, be possible for Mr. Henry James to write an "English" or even a "French" novel without falling into a single technical error; but it is no less certain that a native writer, of equal ability, would treat the same subject in a very different manner. Mr. Jamess' version might contain a great deal more of definite information; but the native work would insinuate an impression which both comes from and goes to a greater depth of apprehension.

But, on the other hand, it is not contended that any American should write an "English" or anything but an "American" novel. The contention is, simply, that he should not refrain from using foreign material, when it happens to suit his exigencies, merely because it is foreign. Objective writing may be quite as good reading as subjective writing, in its proper place and function. In fiction, no more than elsewhere, may a writer pretend to be what he is not, or to know what he knows not. When he finds himself abroad, he must frankly admit his situation; and more will not then be required of him than he is fairly

competent to afford. It will seldom happen, as Hawthorne intimates, that he can successfully reproduce the inner workings and philosophy of European social and political customs and peculiarities; but he can give a picture of the scenery as vivid as can the aborigine, or more so; he can make an accurate study of personal native character; and, finally, and most important of all, he can make use of the conditions of European civilization in events, incidents, and situations which would be impossible on this side of the water. The restrictions, the traditions, the law, and the license of those old countries are full of suggestions to the student of character and circumstances, and supply him with colors and effects that he would else search for in vain. For the truth may as well be admitted; we are at a distinct disadvantage, in America, in respect of the materials of romance. Not that vigorous, pathetic, striking stories may not be constructed here; and there is humor enough, the humor of dialect, of incongruity of character; but, so far as the story depends for its effect, not upon psychical and personal, but upon physical and general events and situations, we soon feel the limit of our resources. An analysis of the human soul, such as may be

found in the "House of the Seven Gables," for instance, is absolute in its interest, apart from outward conditions. But such an analysis cannot be carried on, so to say, *in vacuo*. You must have solid ground to stand on; you must have fitting circumstances, background, and perspective. The ruin of a soul, the tragedy of a heart, demand, as a necessity of harmony and picturesque effect, a corresponding and conspiring environment and stage — just as, in music, the air in the treble is supported and reverberated by the bass accompaniment. The immediate, contemporary act or predicament loses more than half its meaning and impressiveness if it be re-echoed from no sounding-board in the past — its notes, however sweetly and truly touched, fall flatly on the ear. The deeper we attempt to pitch the key of an American story, therefore, the more difficulty shall we find in providing a congruous setting for it; and it is interesting to note how the masters of the craft have met the difficulty. In the "Seven Gables" — and I take leave to say that if I draw illustrations from this particular writer, it is for no other reason than that he presents, more forcibly than most, a method of dealing with the special problem we are considering — Hawthorne,

with the intuitive skill of genius, evolves a background, and produces a reverberation, from materials which he may be said to have created almost as much as discovered. The idea of a house, founded two hundred years ago upon a crime, remaining ever since in possession of its original owners, and becoming the theatre, at last, of the judgment upon that crime, is a thoroughly picturesque idea, but it is thoroughly un-American. Such a thing might conceivably occur, but nothing in this country could well be more unlikely. No one before Hawthorne had ever thought of attempting such a thing; at all events, no one else, before or since, has accomplished it. The preface to the romance in question reveals the principle upon which its author worked, and incidentally gives a new definition of the term "romance,"—a definition of which, thus far, no one but its propounder has known how to avail himself. It amounts, in fact, to an acknowledgment that it is impossible to write a "novel" of American life that shall be at once artistic, realistic, and profound. A novel, he says, aims at a "very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience." A romance, on the other hand,

“while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart, has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer’s own choosing or creation. If he think fit, also, he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out and mellow the lights, and deepen and enrich the shadows, of the picture.” This is good advice, no doubt, but not easy to follow. We can all understand, however, that the difficulties would be greatly lessened could we but command backgrounds of the European order. Thackeray, the Brontës, George Eliot, and others have written great stories, which did not have to be romances, because the literal conditions of life in England have a picturesqueness and a depth which correspond well enough with whatever moral and mental scenery we may project upon them. Hawthorne was forced to use the scenery and capabilities of his native town of Salem. He saw that he could not present these in a realistic light, and his artistic instinct showed him that he must modify or veil the realism of his figures in the same degree and manner as that of his acces-

sories. No doubt, his peculiar genius and temperament eminently qualified him to produce this magical change; it was a remarkable instance of the spontaneous marriage, so to speak, of the means to the end; and even when, in Italy, he had an opportunity to write a story which should be accurate in fact, as well as faithful to "the truth of the human heart," he still preferred a subject which bore to the Italian environment the same relation that the "House of the Seven Gables" and the "Scarlet Letter" do to the American one; in other words, the conception of Donatello is removed as much further than Clifford or Hester Prynne from literal realism as the inherent romance of the Italian setting is above that of New England. The whole thing is advanced a step further towards pure idealism, the relative proportions being maintained.

"The Blithedale Romance" is only another instance in point, and here, as before, we find the principle admirably stated in the preface. "In the old countries," says Hawthorne, "a novelist's work is not put exactly side by side with nature; and he is allowed a license with regard to everyday probability, in view of the improved effects he is bound to produce thereby. Among our-

selves, on the contrary, there is as yet no Faëry Land, so like the real world that, in a suitable remoteness, we cannot well tell the difference, but with an atmosphere of strange enchantment, beheld through which the inhabitants have a propriety of their own. This atmosphere is what the American romancer needs. In its absence, the beings of his imagination are compelled to show themselves in the same category as actually living mortals; a necessity that renders the paint and pasteboard of their composition but too painfully discernible." Accordingly, Hawthorne selects the Brook Farm episode (or a reflection of it) as affording his drama "a theatre, a little removed from the highway of ordinary travel, where the creatures of his brain may play their phantasmagorical antics, without exposing them to too close a comparison with the actual events of real lives." In this case, therefore, an exceptional circumstance is made to answer the same purpose that was attained by different means in the other romances.

But in what manner have our other writers of fiction treated the difficulties that were thus dealt with by Hawthorne?—Herman Melville cannot be instanced here; for his only novel or romance,

whichever it be, was also the most impossible of all his books, and really a terrible example of the enormities which a man of genius may perpetrate when working in a direction unsuited to him. I refer, of course, to "Pierre, or the Ambiguities." Oliver Wendell Holmes's two delightful stories are as favorable examples of what can be done, in the way of an American novel, by a wise, witty, and learned gentleman, as we are likely to see. Nevertheless, one cannot avoid the feeling that they are the work of a man who has achieved success and found recognition in other ways than by stories, or even poems and essays. The interest, in either book, centres round one of those physiological phenomena which impinge so strangely upon the domain of the soul; for the rest, they are simply accurate and humorous portraiture of local dialects and peculiarities, and thus afford little assistance in the search for a universally applicable rule of guidance. Doctor Holmes, I believe, objects to having the term "medicated" applied to his tales; but surely the adjective is not reproachful; it indicates one of the most charming and also, alas! inimitable features of his work.

Bret Harte is probably as valuable a witness as could be summoned in this case. His touch is

realistic, and yet his imagination is poetic and romantic. He has discovered something. He has done something both new and good. Within the space of some fifty pages, he has painted a series of pictures which will last as long as anything in the fifty thousand pages of Dickens. Taking "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" as perhaps the most nearly perfect of the tales, as well as the most truly representative of the writer's powers, let us try to guess its secret. In the first place, it is very short,—a single episode, succinctly and eloquently told. The descriptions of scenery and persons are masterly and memorable. The characters of these persons, their actions, and the circumstances of their lives, are as rugged, as grotesque, as terrible, and also as beautiful, as the scenery. Thus an artistic harmony is established,—the thing which is lacking in so much of our literature. The story moves swiftly on, through humor, pathos, and tragedy, to its dramatic close. It is given with perfect literary taste, and naught in its phases of human nature is either extenuated or set down in malice. The little narrative can be read in a few minutes, and can never be forgotten. But it is only an episode; and it is an episode of an episode,—that of the Californian

gold-fever. The story of the Argonauts is only one story, after all, and these tales of Harte's are but so many facets of the same gem. They are not, however, like chapters in a romance; there is no such vital connection between them as develops a cumulative force. We are no more impressed after reading half a dozen of them than after the first; they are variations of the same theme. They discover to us no new truth about human nature; they only show us certain human beings so placed as to act out their naked selves, — to be neither influenced nor protected by the rewards and screens of conventional civilization. The affectation and insincerity of our daily life make such a spectacle fresh and pleasing to us. But we enjoy it because of its unexpectedness, its separateness, its unlikeness to the ordinary course of existence. It is like a huge, strange, gorgeous flower, an exaggeration and intensification of such flowers as we know; but a flower without roots, unique, never to be reproduced. It is fitting that its portrait should be painted; but, once done, it is done with; we cannot fill our picture-gallery with it. Carlyle wrote the History of the French Revolution, and Bret Harte has written the History of the Argonauts; but it

is absurd to suppose that a national literature could be founded on either episode.

But though Mr. Harte has not left his fellow-craftsmen anything to gather from the lode which he opened and exhausted, we may still learn something from his method. He took things as he found them, and he found them disinclined to weave themselves into an elaborate and balanced narrative. He recognized the deficiency of historical perspective, but he saw that what was lost in slowly growing, culminating power was gained in vivid, instant force. The deeds of his character could not be represented as the final result of long-inherited proclivities; but they could appear between their motive and their consequence, like the draw—aim—fire! of the Western desperado,—as short, sharp, and conclusive. In other words, the conditions of American life, as he saw it, justified a short story, or any number of them, but not a novel; and the fact that he did afterwards attempt a novel only served to confirm his original position. I think that the limitation that he discovered is of much wider application than we are prone to realize. American life has been, as yet, nothing but a series of episodes, of experiments. There has been no such thing as a fixed and

settled condition of society, not subject to change itself, and therefore affording a foundation and contrast to minor or individual vicissitudes. We cannot write American-grown novels, because a novel is not an episode, nor an aggregation of episodes; we cannot write romances in the Hawthorne sense, because, as yet, we do not seem to be clever enough. Several courses are, however, open to us, and we are pursuing them all. First, we are writing "short stories," accounts of episodes needing no historical perspective, and not caring for any; and, so far as one may judge, we write the best short stories in the world. Secondly, we may spin out our short stories into long-short stories, just as we may imagine a baby six feet high; it takes up more room, but is just as much a baby as one of twelve inches. Thirdly, we may graft our flower of romance on a European stem, and enjoy ourselves as much as the European novelists do, and with as clear a conscience. We are stealing that which enriches us and does not impoverish them. It is silly and childish to make the boundaries of the America of the mind coincide with those of the United States. We need not dispute about free trade and protection here; literature is not commerce, nor is it

politics. America is not a petty nationality, like France, England, and Germany; but whatever in such nationalities tends toward enlightenment and freedom is American. Let us not, therefore, confirm ourselves in a false and ignoble conception of our meaning and mission in the world. Let us not carry into the temple of the Muse the jealousies, the prejudice, the ignorance, the selfishness of our "Senate" and "Representatives," strangely so called! Let us not refuse to breathe the air of Heaven, lest there be something European or Asian in it. If we cannot have a national literature in the narrow, geographical sense of the phrase, it is because our inheritance transcends all geographical definitions. The great American novel may not be written this year, or even in this century. Meanwhile, let us not fear to ride, and ride to death, whatever species of Pegasus we can catch. It can do us no harm, and it may help us to acquire a firmer seat against the time when our own, our very own winged steed makes his appearance.

CHAPTER IV.

LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN.

LITERATURE is that quality in books which affords delight and nourishment to the soul. But this is a scientific and skeptical age, insomuch that one hardly ventures to take for granted that every reader will know what his soul is. It is not the intellect, though it gives the intellect light; nor the emotions, though they receive their warmth from it. It is the most catholic and constant element of human nature, yet it bears no direct part in the practical affairs of life; it does not struggle, it does not even suffer; but merely emerges or retires, glows or congeals, according to the company in which it finds itself. We might say that the soul is a name for man's innate sympathy with goodness and truth in the abstract; for no man can have a bad soul, though his heart may be evil, or his mind depraved, because the soul's access to the mind or heart has been so obstructed as to leave the moral consciousness

cold and dark. The soul, in other words, is the only conservative and peacemaker; it affords the only unalterable ground upon which all men can always meet; it unselfishly identifies or unites us with our fellows, in contradistinction to the selfish intellect, which individualizes us and sets each man against every other. Doubtless, then, the soul is an amiable and desirable possession, and it would be a pity to deprive it of so much encouragement as may be compatible with due attention to the serious business of life. For there are moments, even in the most active careers, when it seems agreeable to forget competition, rivalry, jealousy; when it is a rest to think of one's self as a man rather than a person;—moments when time and place appear impertinent, and that most profitable which affords least palpable profit. At such seasons, a man looks inward, or, as the American poet puts it, he loafs and invites his soul, and then he is at a disadvantage if his soul, in consequence of too persistent previous neglect, declines to respond to the invitation, and remains immured in that secret place which, as years pass by, becomes less and less accessible to so many of us.

When I say that literature nourishes the soul, I implicitly refuse the title of literature to anything

in books that either directly or indirectly promotes any worldly or practical use. Of course, what is literature to one man may be anything but literature to another, or to the same man under different circumstances; Virgil to the schoolboy, for instance, is a very different thing from the Virgil of the scholar. But whatever you read with the design of improving yourself in some profession, or of acquiring information likely to be of advantage to you in any pursuit or contingency, or of enabling yourself to hold your own with other readers, or even of rendering yourself that enviable nondescript, a person of culture,—whatever, in short, is read with any assignable purpose whatever, is in so far not literature. The Bible may be literature to Mr. Matthew Arnold, because he reads it for fun; but to Luther, Calvin, or the pupils of a Sunday-school, it is essentially something else. Literature is the written communications of the soul of mankind with itself; it is liable to appear in the most unexpected places, and in the oddest company; it vanishes when we would grasp it, and appears when we look not for it. Chairs of literature are established in the great universities, and it is literature, no doubt, that the professor discourses; but

it ceases to be literature before it reaches the student's ear; though, again, when the same students stumble across it in the recesses of their memory ten or twenty years later, it may have become literature once more. Finally, literature may, upon occasion, avail a man more than the most thorough technical information; but it will not be because it supplements or supplants that information, but because it has so tempered and exalted his general faculty that whatever he may do is done more clearly and comprehensively than might otherwise be the case.

Having thus, in some measure, considered what is literature and what the soul, let us note, further, that the literature proper to manhood is not proper to childhood, though the reverse is not — or, at least, never ought to be — true. In childhood, the soul and the mind act in harmony; the mind has not become preoccupied or sophisticated by so-called useful knowledge; it responds obediently to the soul's impulses and intuitions. Children have no morality; they have not yet descended to the level where morality suggests itself to them. For morality is the outcome of spiritual pride, the most stubborn and insidious of all sins; the pride which prompts each of us to

declare himself holier than his fellows, and to support that claim by parading his docility to the Decalogue. Docility to any set of rules, no matter of how divine authority, so long as it is inspired by hope of future good or present advantage, is rather worse than useless: except our righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees,—that is, except it be spontaneous righteousness or morality, and, therefore, not morality, but unconscious goodness,—we shall in no wise have benefited either ourselves or others. Children, when left to themselves, artlessly and innocently act out the nature that is common to saint and sinner alike; they are selfish, angry, and foolish, because their state is human; and they are loving, truthful, and sincere, because their origin is divine. All that pleases or agrees with them is good; all that opposes or offends them is evil, and this, without any reference whatever to the moral code in vogue among their elders. But, on the other hand, children cannot be tempted as we are, because they suppose that everything is free and possible, and because they are as yet uncontaminated by the artificial cravings which the artificial prohibitions incident to our civilization create. Life is to them

a constantly widening circle of things to be had and enjoyed; nor does it ever occur to them that their desires can conflict with those of others, or with the laws of the universe. They cannot consciously do wrong, nor understand that any one else can do so; untoward accidents may happen, but inanimate nature is just as liable to be objectionable in this respect as human beings: the stone that trips them up, the thorn that scratches them, the snow that makes their flesh tingle, is an object of their resentment in just the same kind and degree as are the men and women who thwart or injure them. But of duty — that dreary device to secure future reward by present suffering; of conscientiousness — that fear of present good for the sake of future punishment; of remorse — that disavowal of past pleasure for fear of the sting in its tail; of ambition — that begrudging of all honorable results that are not effected by one's self; of these, and all similar politic and arbitrary masks of self-love and pusillanimity, these poor children know and suspect nothing. Yet their eyes are much keener than ours, for they see through the surface of nature and perceive its symbolism; they see the living reality, of which nature is the veil, and are continually at

fault because this veil is not, after all, the reality, — because it is fixed and unplastic. The “deep mind of dauntless infancy” is, in fact, the only revelation we have, except divine revelation itself, of that pure and natural life of man which we dream of, and liken to heaven; but we, nevertheless, in our penny-wise, pound-foolish way, insist upon regarding it as ignorance, and do our best, from the earliest possible moment, to disenchant and dispel it. We call the outrage education, understanding thereby the process of exterminating in the child the higher order of faculties and the intuitions, and substituting for them the external memory, timidity, self-esteem, and all that armament of petty weapons and defences which may enable us to get the better of our fellow-creatures in this world, and receive the reward of our sagacity in the next. The success of our efforts is pitiably complete; for though the child, if fairly engaged in single combat, might make a formidable resistance against the infliction of “lessons,” it cannot long withstand our crafty device of sending it to a place where it sees a score or a hundred of little victims like itself, all being driven to the same Siberia. The spirit of emulation is aroused, and lo! away they all

scamper, each straining its utmost to reach the barren goal ahead of all competitors. So do we make the most ignoble passions of our children our allies in the unholy task of divesting them of their childhood. And yet, who is not aware that the best men the world has seen have been those who, throughout their lives, retained the aroma of childlike simplicity which they brought with them into existence? Learning—the acquisition of specific facts—is not wisdom; it is almost incompatible with wisdom; indeed, unless the mind be powerful enough not only to fuse its facts, but to vaporize them,—to sublimate them into an impalpable atmosphere,—they will stand in wisdom's way. Wisdom comes from the pondering and the application to life of certain truths quite above the sphere of facts, and of infinitely more moment and less complexity,—truths which are often found to be in accordance with the spiritual instinct called intuition, which children possess more fully than grown persons. The wisdom of our children would often astonish us, if we would only forbear the attempt to make them knowing, and submissively accept instruction from them. Through all the imperfection of their inherited infirmity, we shall ever and anon be conscious of

the radiance of a beautiful, unconscious intelligence, worth more than the smartness of schools and the cleverness of colleges. But no; we abhor the very notion of it, and generally succeed in extinguishing it long before the Three R's are done with.

And yet, by wisely directing the child's use of the first of the Three, much of the ill effects of the trio and their offspring might be counteracted. If we believed — if the great mass of people known as the civilized world did actually and livingly believe — that there was really anything beyond or above the physical order of nature, our children's literature, wrongly so called, would not be what it is. We believe what we can see and touch; we teach them to believe the same, and, not satisfied with that, we sedulously warn them not to believe anything else. The child, let us suppose, has heard from some unauthorized person that there are fairies — little magical creatures an inch high, up to all manner of delightful feats. He comprehends the whole matter at half a word, feels that he had known it already, and half thinks that he sees one or two on his way home. He runs up to his mother and tells her about it; and has she ever seen fairies? Alas! His mother tells him

that the existence of such a being as a fairy is impossible. In old times, when the world was very ignorant and superstitious, they used to ascribe everything that happened to supernatural agency; even the trifling daily accidents of one's life, such as tumbling down stairs, or putting the right shoe on the left foot, were thought or fancied to be the work of some mysterious power; and since ignorant people are very apt to imagine they see what they believe [proceeds this mother] instead of only believing what they see; and since, furthermore, ignorance disposes to exaggeration and thus to untruth, these people ended by asserting that they saw fairies. "Now, my child," continues the parent, "it would grieve me to see you the victim of such folly. Do not read fairy stories. They are not true to life; they fill your mind with idle notions; they cannot form your understanding, or aid you to do your work in the world. If you should happen to fall in with such fables, be careful as you read to bear in mind that they are pure inventions—pretty, sometimes, perhaps, but essentially frivolous, if not immoral. You have, however, thanks to the enlightened enterprise of writers and publishers, an endless assortment of juvenile books and periodicals which

combine legitimate amusement with sound and trustworthy instruction. Here are stories about little children, just like yourself, who talk and act just as you do, and to whom nothing supernatural or outlandish ever happens; and whose adventures, when you have read them, convey to you some salutary moral lesson. What more can you want? Yes, very likely ‘Grimm’s Tales’ and ‘The Arabian Nights’ may seem more attractive; but in this world many harmful things put on an inviting guise, which deceives the inexperienced eye. May my child remember that all is not gold that glitters, and desire, not what is diverting merely, but what is useful and . . . and conventional!”

Let us admit that, things being as they are, it is necessary to develop the practical side of the child’s nature, to ground him in moral principles, and to make him comprehend and fear—nominally God, but really—society. But why, in addition to doing this, should we strangle the unpractical side of his nature,—the ideal, imaginative, spiritual side,—the side which alone can determine his value or worthlessness in eternity? If our minds were visible as our bodies are, we should behold on every side of us, and in our own

private looking-glasses, such abortions, cripples, and monstrosities as all the slums of Europe and the East could not parallel. We pretend to make little men and women out of our children, and we make little dwarfs and hobgoblins out of them. Moreover, we should not diminish even the practical efficiency of the coming generation by rejecting their unpractical side. Whether this boy's worldly destination be to clean a stable or to represent his country at a foreign court, he will do his work all the better, instead of worse, for having been allowed freedom of expansion on the ideal plane. He will do it comprehensively, or as from above downward, instead of blindly, or as from below upward. To a certain extent, this position is very generally admitted by instructors nowadays; but the admission bears little or no fruit. The ideality and imagination which they have in mind are but a partial and feeble imitation of what is really signified by those terms. Ideality and imagination are themselves merely the symptom or expression of the faculty and habit of spiritual or subjective intuition—a faculty of paramount value in life, though of late years, in the rush of rational knowledge and discovery, it has fallen into neglect. But it is by means of this

faculty alone that the great religion of India was constructed—the most elaborate and seductive of all systems; and although as a faith Buddhism is also the most treacherous and dangerous attack ever made upon the immortal welfare of mankind, that circumstance certainly does not discredit or invalidate the claim to importance of spiritual intuition itself. It may be objected that spiritual intuition is a vague term. It undoubtedly belongs to an abstruse region of psychology; but its meaning for our present purpose is simply the act of testing questions of the moral consciousness by an inward touchstone of truth, instead of by external experience or information. That the existence of such a touchstone should be ridiculed by those who are accustomed to depend for their belief upon palpable or logical evidence, goes without saying; but, on the other hand, there need be no collision or argument on the point, since no question with which intuition is concerned can ever present itself to persons who pin their faith to the other sort of demonstration. The reverse of this statement is by no means true; but it would lead us out of our present path to discuss the matter.

Assuming, however, that intuition is possible,

it is evident that it should exist in children in an extremely pure, if not in its most potent state; and to deny it opportunity of development might fairly be called a barbarity. It will hardly be disputed that children are an important element in society. Without them we should lose the memory of our youth, and all opportunity for the exercise of unselfish and disinterested affection. Life would become arid and mechanical to a degree now scarcely conceivable; chastity and all the human virtues would cease to exist; marriage would be an aimless and absurd transaction; and the brotherhood of man, even in the nominal sense that it now exists, would speedily be abjured. Political economy and sociology neglect to make children an element in their arguments and deductions, and no small part of their error is attributable to that circumstance. But although children still are born, and all the world acknowledges their paramount moral and social value, the general tendency of what we are forced to call education at the present day is to shorten as much as possible the period of childhood. In America and Germany especially—but more in America than in Germany—children are urged and stimulated to “grow up” almost before they

have been short-coated. That conceptions of order and discipline should be early instilled into them is proper enough; but no other order and discipline seems to be contemplated by educators than the forcing them to stand and be stuffed full of indigestible and incongruous knowledge, than which proceeding nothing more disorderly could be devised. It looks as if we felt the innocence and naturalness of our children to be a rebuke to us, and wished to do away with it in short order. There is something in the New Testament about offending the little ones, and the preferred alternative thereto; and really we are outraging not only the objective child, but the subjective one also — that in ourselves, namely, which is innocent and pure, and without which we had better not be at all. Now I do not mean to say that the only medicine that can cure this malady is legitimate children's literature; wise parents are also very useful, though not perhaps so generally available. My present contention is that the right sort of literature is an agent of great efficiency, and may be very easily come by. Children derive more genuine enjoyment and profit from a good book than most grown people are susceptible of: they see what is described, and themselves enact

and perfect the characters of the story as it goes along.

Nor is it indispensable that literature of the kind required should forthwith be produced; a great deal, of admirable quality, is already on hand. There are a few great poems — Spenser's "Faërie Queene" is one — which no well regulated child should be without; but poetry in general is not exactly what we want. Children — healthy children — never have the poetic genius; but they are born mystics, and they have the sense of humor. The best way to speak to them is in prose, and the best kind of prose is the symbolic. The hermetic philosophers of the Middle Ages are probably the authors of some of the best children's stories extant. In these tales, disguised beneath what is apparently the simplest and most artless flow of narrative, profound truths are discussed and explained. The child reads the narrative, and certainly cannot be accused of comprehending the hidden philosophical problem; yet that also has its share in charming him. The reason is partly that true symbolic or figurative writing is the simplest form known to literature. The simplest, that is to say, in outward form, — it may be indefinitely abstruse as to its inward con-

tents. Indeed, the very cause of its formal simplicity is its interior profundity. The principle of hermetic writing was, as we know, to disguise philosophical propositions and results under a form of words which should ostensibly signify some very ordinary and trivial thing. It was a secret language, in the vocabulary of which material facts are used to represent spiritual truths. But it differed from ordinary secret language in this, that not only were the truths represented in the symbols, but the philosophical development of the truth, in its ramifications, was completely evolved under the cover of a logically consistent tale. This, evidently, is a far higher achievement of ingenuity than merely to string together a series of unrelated parts of speech, which, on being tested by the "key," shall discover the message or information really intended. It is, in fact, a practical application of the philosophical discovery, made by or communicated to the hermetic philosophers, that every material object in nature answers to or corresponds with a certain one or group of philosophical truths. Viewed in this light, the science of symbols or of correspondences ceases to be an arbitrary device, susceptible of alteration according to fancy, and avouches itself

an essential and consistent relation between the things of the mind and the things of the senses. There is a complete mental creation, answering to the material creation, not continuously evolved from it, but on a different or detached plane. The sun,—to take an example,—the source of light and heat, and thereby of physical nature, is in these fables always the symbol of God, of love and wisdom, by which the spirit of man is created. Light, then, answers to wisdom, and heat to love. And since all physical substances are the result of the combined action of light and heat, we may easily perceive how these hermetic sages were enabled to use every physical object as a cloak of its corresponding philosophical truth,—with no other liability to error than might result from the imperfect condition of their knowledge of physical laws.

To return, however, to the children, I need scarcely remark that the cause of children's taking so kindly to hermetic writing is that it is actually a living writing; it is alive in precisely the same way that nature, or man himself, is alive. Matter is dead; life organizes and animates it. And all writing is essentially dead which is a mere transcript of fact, and is not inwardly organized and

vivified by a spiritual significance. Children do not know what it is that makes a human being smile, move, and talk; but they know that such a phenomenon is infinitely more interesting than a doll; and they prove it by themselves supplying the doll with speech and motions out of their own minds, so as to make it as much like a real person as possible. In the same way, they do not perceive the philosophical truth which is the cause of existence of the hermetic fable; but they find that fable far more juicy and substantial than the ordinary narrative of every-day facts, because, however fine the surface of the latter may be, it has, after all, nothing but its surface to recommend it. It has no soul; it is not alive; and, though they cannot explain why, they feel the difference between that thin, fixed grimace and the changing smile of the living countenance.

It would scarcely be practicable, however, to confine the children's reading to hermetic literature; for not much of it is extant in its pure state. But it is hardly too much to say that all fairy stories, and derivations from these, trace their descent from an hermetic ancestry. They are often unaware of their genealogy; but the sparks of that primal vitality are in them. The

fairies are themselves a symbol for the expression of a more complex and abstract idea; but, once having come into existence, and being, not a pure symbol, but a hybrid between the symbol and that for which it stands, it presently began an independent career of its own. The mediæval imagination went to work with it, found it singularly and delightfully plastic to its touch and requirements, and soon made it the centre of a new and charming world, in which a whole army of graceful and romantic fancies, which are always in quest of an arena in which to disport themselves before the mind, found abundant accommodation and nourishment. The fairy land of mediæval Christianity seems to us the most satisfactory of all fairy lands, probably because it is more in accord with our genius and prejudices than those of the East; and it fitted in so aptly with the popular mediæval ignorance on the subject of natural phenomena, that it became actually an article of belief with the mass of men, who trembled at it while they invented it, in the most delicious imaginable state of enchanted alarm. All this is prime reading for children; because, though it does not carry an orderly spiritual meaning within it, it is more spiritual than material, and is con-

structed entirely according to the dictates of an exuberant and richly colored, but, nevertheless, in its own sphere, legitimate imagination. Indeed, fairy land, though as it were accidentally created, has the same permanent right to be that Beauty has; it agrees with a genuine aspect of human nature, albeit one much discountenanced just at present. The sequel to it, in which romantic human personages are accredited with fairy-like attributes, as in the "Faërie Queene," already alluded to, is a step in the wrong direction, but not a step long enough to carry us altogether outside of the charmed circle. The child's instinct of selection being vast and cordial,—he will make a grain of true imagination suffuse and glorify a whole acre of twaddle,—we may with security leave him in that fantastic society. Moreover, some children being less imaginative than others, and all children being less imaginative in some moods and conditions than at other seasons, the elaborate compositions of Tasso, Cervantes, and the others, though on the boundary line between what is meat for babes and the other sort of meat, have also their abiding use.

The "Arabian Nights" introduced us to the domain of the Oriental imagination, and has done

more than all the books of travel in the East to make us acquainted with the Asiatic character and its differences from our own. From what has already been said on the subject of spiritual intuition in relation to these races, one is prepared to find that all the Eastern literature that has any value is hermetic writing, and therefore, in so far, proper for children. But the incorrigible subtlety of the Oriental intellect has vitiated much of their symbology, and the sentiment of sheer wonder is stimulated rather than that of orderly imagination. To read the "Arabian Nights" or the "Bhagavad-Gita" is a sort of dissipation; upon the unhackneyed mind of the child it leaves a reactionary sense of depression. The life which it embodies is distorted, over-colored, and exciting; it has not the serene and balanced power of the Western productions. Moreover, these books were not written with the grave philosophic purpose that animated our own hermetic school; it is rather a sort of jugglery practised with the subject—an exercise of ingenuity and invention for their own sake. It indicates a lack of the feeling of responsibility on the writers' part,—a result, doubtless, of the prevailing fatalism that underlies all their thought. It is not essentially whole-

some, in short; but it is immeasurably superior to the best of the productions called forth by our modern notions of what should be given to children to read.

But I can do no more than touch upon this branch of the subject; nor will it be possible to linger long over the department of our own literature which came into being with "Robinson Crusoe." No theory as to children's books would be worth much attention which found itself obliged to exclude that memorable work. Although it submits in a certain measure to classification, it is almost *sui generis*; no book of its kind, approaching it in merit, has ever been written. In what, then, does its fascination consist? There is certainly nothing hermetic about it; it is the simplest and most studiously matter-of-fact narrative of events, comprehensible without the slightest effort, and having no meaning that is not apparent on the face of it. And yet children, and grown people also, read it again and again, and cannot find it uninteresting. I think the phenomenon may largely be due to the nature of the subject, which is really of primary and universal interest to mankind. It is the story of the struggle of man with wild and hostile nature,—in the

larger sense an elementary theme,—his shifts, his failures, his perils, his fears, his hopes, his successes. The character of Robinson is so artfully generalized or universalized, and sympathy for him is so powerfully aroused and maintained, that the reader, especially the child reader, inevitably identifies himself with him, and feels his emotions and struggles as his own. The ingredient of suspense is never absent from the story, and the absence of any plot prevents us from perceiving its artificiality. It is, in fact, a type of the history of the human race, not on the higher plane, but on the physical one; the history of man's contest with and final victory over physical nature. The very simplicity and obviousness of the details give them grandeur and comprehensiveness: no part of man's character which his contact with nature can affect or develop is left untried in Robinson. He manifests in little all historical earthly experiences of the race; such is the scheme of the book; and its permanence in literature is due to the sobriety and veracity with which that scheme is carried out. To speak succinctly, it does for the body what the hermetic and cognate literature does for the soul; and for the healthy man, the body is not less important

than the soul in its own place and degree. It is not the work of the Creator, but it is contingent upon creation.

But poor Robinson has been most unfortunate in his progeny, which at this day overrun the whole earth, and render it a worse wilderness than ever was the immortal Crusoe Island. Miss Edgeworth, indeed, might fairly pose as the most persistently malignant of all sources of error in the design of children's literature; but it is to be feared that it was Defoe who first made her aware of the availability of her own venom. She foisted her prim and narrow moral code upon the commonplace adventures of a priggish little boy and his companions; and straightway the whole dreary and disastrous army of sectarians and dogmatists took up the cry, and have been ringing the lugubrious changes on it ever since. There is really no estimating the mortal wrong that has been done to childhood by Maria Edgeworth's "Frank" and "The Parent's Assistant"; and, for my part, I derive a melancholy joy in availing myself of this opportunity to express my sense of my personal share in the injury. I believe that my affection for the human race is as genuine as the average; but I am sure it would have

been greater had Miss Edgeworth never been born; and were I to come across any philosophical system whereby I could persuade myself that she belonged to some other order of beings than the human, I should be strongly tempted to embrace that system on that ground alone.

After what has been advanced in the preceding pages, it does not need that I should state how earnestly I deprecate the kind of literary food which we are now furnishing to the coming generation in such sinister abundance. I am sure it is written and published with good and honorable motives; but at the very best it can only do no harm. Moreover, however well intentioned, it is bad as literature; it is poorly conceived and written, and, what is worse, it is saturated with affectation. For an impression prevails that one needs to talk down to children;—to keep them constantly reminded that they are innocent, ignorant little things, whose consuming wish it is to be good and go to Sunday-school, and who will be all gratitude and docility to whomsoever provides them with the latest fashion of moral sugar-plums; whereas, so far as my experience and information goes, children are the most formidable

literary critics in the world. Matthew Arnold himself has not so sure an instinct for what is sound and good in a book as any intelligent little boy or girl of eight years old. They judge absolutely; they are hampered by no comparisons or relative considerations. They cannot give chapter and verse for their opinion; but about the opinion itself there is no doubt. They have no theories; they judge in a white light. They have no prejudices nor traditions; they come straight from the simple source of life. But, on the other hand, they are readily hounded and made morbid by improper drugs, and presently, no doubt, lose their appetite for what is wholesome. Now, we cannot hope that an army of hermetic philosophers or Mother-Gooses will arise at need and remedy all abuses; but at least we might refrain from moralizing and instruction, and, if we can do nothing more, confine ourselves to plain stories of adventure, say, with no ulterior object whatever. There still remains the genuine literature of the past to draw upon; but let us beware, as we would of forgery and perjury, of serving it up, as has been done too often, medicated and modified to suit the foolish dogmatism of the moment. Hans Christian

Andersen was the last writer of children's stories, properly so called; though, considering how well married to his muse he was, it is a wonder as well as a calamity that he left no descendants.

CHAPTER V.

THE MORAL AIM IN FICTION.

THE producers of modern fiction, who have acquiesced more or less completely in the theory of art for art's sake, are not, perhaps, aware that a large class of persons still exist who hold fiction to be unjustifiable, save in so far as the author has it at heart not only (or chiefly) to adorn the tale, but also (and first of all) to point the moral. The novelist, in other words, should so mould the characters and shape the plot of his imaginary drama as to vindicate the wisdom and integrity of the Decalogue: if he fail to do this, or if he do the opposite of this, he deserves not the countenance of virtuous and God-fearing persons.

Doubtless it should be evident to every sane and impartial mind, whether orthodox or agnostic, that an art which runs counter to the designs of God toward the human race, or to the growth of the sentiment of universal human brotherhood, must sooner or later topple down from its fantastic and

hollow foundation. "Hitch your wagon to a star," says Emerson; "do not lie and steal: no god will help." And although, for the sake of his own private interests of the moment, a man will occasionally violate the moral law, yet, with mankind at large, the necessity of vindicating the superior advantages of right over wrong is acknowledged not only in the interests of civilized society, but because we feel that, however hostile "goodness" may seem to be to my or your personal and temporary aims, it still remains the only wholesome and handsome choice for the race at large: and therefore do we, as a race, refuse to tolerate — on no matter how plausible an artistic plea — any view of human life which either professes indifference to this universal sentiment, or perversely challenges it.

The true ground of dispute, then, does not lie here. The art which can stoop to be "procuress to the lords of hell," is art no longer. But, on the other hand, it would be difficult to point to any great work of art, generally acknowledged to be such, which explicitly concerns itself with the vindication of any specific moral doctrine. The story in which the virtuous are rewarded for their virtue, and the evil punished for their wickedness,

fails, somehow, to enlist our full sympathy; it falls flatly on the ear of the mind; it does not stimulate thought. It does not satisfy; we fancy that something still remains to be said, or, if this be all, then it was hardly worth saying. The real record of life — its terror, its beauty, its pathos, its depth — seems to have been missed. We may admit that the tale is in harmony with what we have been taught ought to happen; but the lessons of our private experience have not authenticated our moral formulas; we have seen the evil exalted and the good brought low; and we inevitably desire that our “fiction” shall tell us, not what ought to happen, but what, as a matter of fact, does happen. To put this a little differently: we feel that the God of the orthodox moralist is not the God of human nature. He is nothing but the moralist himself in a highly sublimated state, but betraying, in spite of that sublimation, a fatal savor of human personality. The conviction that any man — George Washington, let us say — is a morally unexceptionable man, does not in the least reconcile us to the idea of God being an indefinitely exalted counterpart of Washington. Such a God would be “most tolerable, and not to be endured”; and the more exalted he was, the

less endurable would he be. In short, man instinctively refuses to regard the literal inculcation of the Decalogue as the final word of God to the human race, and much less to the individuals of that race; and when he finds a story-teller proceeding upon the contrary assumption, he is apt to put that story-teller down as either an ass or a humbug. As for art—if the reader happen to be competent to form an opinion on that phase of the matter—he will generally find that the art dwindles in direct proportion as the moralized deity expatiates; in fact, that they are incompatible. And he will also confess (if he have the courage of his opinions) that, as between moralized deity and true art, his choice is heartily and unreservedly for the latter.

I do not apprehend that the above remarks, fairly interpreted, will encounter serious opposition from either party to the discussion; and yet, so far as I am aware, neither party has as yet availed himself of the light which the conclusion throws upon the nature of art itself. It should be obvious, however, that upon a true definition of art the whole argument must ultimately hinge: for we can neither deny that art exists, nor affirm that it can exist inconsistently with a recognition

of a divinely beneficent purpose in creation. It must, therefore, in some way be an expression or reflection of that purpose. But in what does the purpose in question essentially consist?

Broadly speaking — for it would be impossible within the present limits to attempt a full analysis of the subject — it may be considered as a gradual and progressive Purification, not of this or that particular individual in contradistinction to his fellows, but of human nature as an entirety. The evil into which all men are born, and of which the Decalogue, or conscience, makes us aware, is not an evil voluntarily contracted on our part, but is inevitable to us as the creation of a truly infinite love and wisdom. It is, in fact, our characteristic nature as animals: and it is only because we are not only animal, but also and above all human, that we are enabled to recognize it as evil instead of good. We absolve the cat, the dog, the wolf, and the lion from any moral responsibility for their deeds, because we feel them to be deficient in conscience, which is our own divinely bestowed gift and privilege, and which has been defined as the spirit of God in the created nature, seeking to become the creature's own spirit. Now, the power to correct

this evil does not abide in us as individuals, nor will a literal adherence to the moral law avail to purify any mother's son of us. Conscience always says "Do not," — never "Do"; and obedience to it neither can give us a personal claim on God's favor nor was it intended to do so: its true function is to keep us innocent, so that we may not individually obstruct the accomplishment of the divine ends toward us as a race. Our nature not being the private possession of any one of us, but the impersonal substratum of us all, it follows that it cannot be redeemed piecemeal, but only as a whole; and, manifestly, the only Being capable of effecting such redemption is not Peter, or Paul, or George Washington, or any other atomic exponent of that nature, be he who he may; but He alone whose infinitude is the complement of our finiteness, and whose gradual descent into human nature (figured in Scripture under the symbol of the Incarnation) is even now being accomplished — as any one may perceive who reads aright the progressive enlightenment of conscience and intellect which history, through many vicissitudes, displays. We find, therefore, that art is, essentially, the imaginative expression of a divine life in man. Art depends for its worth

and veracity, not upon its adherence to literal fact, but upon its perception and portrayal of the underlying truth, of which fact is but the phenomenal and imperfect shadow. And it can have nothing to do with personal vice or virtue, in the way either of condemning the one or vindicating the other; it can only treat them as elements in its picture — as factors in human destiny. For the notion commonly entertained that the practice of virtue gives us a claim upon the Divine Exchequer (so to speak), and the habit of acting virtuously for the sake of maintaining our credit in society, and ensuring our prosperity in the next world,—in so thinking and acting we misapprehend the true inwardness of the matter. To cultivate virtue because it pays, no matter what the sort of coin in which payment is looked for, is to be the victims of a lamentable delusion. For such virtue makes each man jealous of his neighbor; whereas the aim of Providence is to bring about the broadest human fellowship. A man's physical body separates him from other men; and this fact disposes him to the error that his nature is also a separate possession, and that he can only be "good" by denying himself. But the only goodness that is really good is a spon-

taneous and impersonal evolution, and this occurs, not where self-denial has been practised, but only where a man feels himself to be absolutely on the same level of desert or non-desert as are the mass of his fellow-creatures. There is no use in obeying the commandments, unless it be done, not to make one's self more deserving than another of God's approbation, but out of love for goodness and truth in themselves, apart from any personal considerations. The difference between true religion and formal religion is that the first leads us to abandon all personal claims to salvation, and to care only for the salvation of humanity as a whole; whereas the latter stimulates us to practise outward self-denial, in order that our real self may be exalted. Such self-denial results not in humility, but in spiritual pride.

In no other way than this, it seems to me, can art and morality be brought into harmony. Art bears witness to the presence in us of something purer and loftier than anything of which we can be individually conscious. Its complete expression we call inspiration; and he who is the subject of the inspiration can account no better than any one else for the result which art accom-

plishes through him. The perfect poem is found, not made; the mind which utters it did not invent it. Art takes all nature and all knowledge for her province; but she does not leave it as she found it; by the divine necessity that is upon her, she breathes a soul into her materials, and organizes chaos into form. But never, under any circumstances, does she deign to minister to our selfish personal hope or greed. She shows us how to love our neighbor, never ourselves. Shakespeare, Homer, Phidias, Raphael, were no Pharisees—at least in so far as they were artists; nor did any one ever find in their works any countenance for that inhuman assumption—"I am holier than thou!" In the world's darkest hours, art has sometimes stood as the sole witness of the nobler life that was in eclipse. Civilizations arise and vanish; forms of religion hold sway and are forgotten; learning and science advance and gather strength; but true art was as great and as beautiful three thousand years ago as it is to-day. We are prone to confound the man with the artist, and to suppose that he is artistic by possession and inheritance, instead of exclusively by dint of what he does. No artist worthy the name ever dreams of putting himself into his work, but

only what is infinitely distinct from and other than himself. It is not the poet who brings forth the poem, but the poem that begets the poet; it makes him, educates him, creates in him the poetic faculty. Those whom we call great men, the heroes of history, are but the organs of great crises and opportunities: as Emerson has said, they are the most indebted men. In themselves they are not great; there is no ratio between their achievements and them. Our judgment is misled; we do not discriminate between the divine purpose and the human instrument. When we listen to Napoleon fretting his soul away at Elba, or to Carlyle wrangling with his wife at Chelsea, we are shocked at the discrepancy between the lofty public performance and the petty domestic shortcoming. Yet we do wrong to blame them; the nature of which they are examples is the same nature that is shared also by the publican and the sinner.

Instead, therefore, of saying that art should be moral, we should rather say that all true morality is art — that art is the test of morality. To attempt to make this heavenly Pegasus draw the sordid plough of our selfish moralistic prejudices is a grotesque subversion of true order. Why

should the novelist make believe that the wicked are punished and the good are rewarded in this world? Does he not know, on the contrary, that whatsoever is basest in our common life tends irresistibly to the highest places, and that the selfish element in our nature is on the side of public order? Evil is at present a more efficient instrument of order (because an interested one) than good; and the novelist who makes this appear will do a far greater and more lasting benefit to humanity than he who follows the cut-and-dried artificial programme of bestowing crowns on the saint and whips of scorpions on the sinner.

As a matter of fact, I repeat, the best influences of the best literature have never been didactic, and there is no reason to believe they ever will be. The only semblance of didacticism which can enter into literature is that which conveys such lessons as may be learned from sea and sky, mountain and valley, wood and stream, bird and beast; and from the broad human life of races, nations, and firesides; a lesson that is not obvious and superficial, but so profoundly hidden in the creative depths as to emerge only to an apprehension equally profound. For the chatter and

affectation of sense disturb and offend that inward spiritual ear which, in the silent recesses of meditation, hears the prophetic murmur of the vast ocean of human nature that flows within us and around us all.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MAKER OF MANY BOOKS.

DURING the winter of 1879, when I was in London, it was my fortune to attend a social meeting of literary men at the rooms of a certain eminent publisher. The rooms were full of tobacco-smoke and talk, amid which were discernible, on all sides, the figures and faces of men more or less renowned in the world of books. Most noticeable among these personages was a broad-shouldered, sturdy man, of middle height, with a ruddy countenance, and snow-white tempestuous beard and hair. He wore large, gold-rimmed spectacles, but his eyes were black and brilliant, and looked at his interlocutor with a certain genial fury of inspection. He seemed to be in a state of some excitement; he spoke volubly and almost boisterously, and his voice was full-toned and powerful, though pleasant to the ear. He turned himself, as he spoke, with a burly briskness, from one side to another, addressing

himself first to this auditor and then to that, his words bursting forth from beneath his white moustache with such an impetus of hearty breath that it seemed as if all opposing arguments must be blown quite away. Meanwhile he flourished in the air an ebony walking-stick, with much vigor of gesticulation, and narrowly missing, as it appeared, the pates of his listeners. He was clad in evening dress, though the rest of the company was, for the most part, in mufti; and he was an exceedingly fine-looking old gentleman. At the first glance, you would have taken him to be some civilized and modernized Squire Western, nourished with beef and ale, and roughly hewn out of the most robust and least refined variety of human clay. Looking at him more narrowly, however, you would have reconsidered this judgment. Though his general contour and aspect were massive and sturdy, the lines of his features were delicately cut; his complexion was remarkably pure and fine, and his face was susceptible of very subtle and sensitive changes of expression. Here was a man of abundant physical strength and vigor, no doubt, but carrying within him a nature more than commonly alert and impressible. His organization, though thoroughly healthy, was both

complex and high-wrought; his character was simple and straightforward to a fault, but he was abnormally conscientious, and keenly alive to others' opinion concerning him. It might be thought that he was overburdened with self-esteem, and unduly opinionated; but, in fact, he was but over-anxious to secure the good-will and agreement of all with whom he came in contact. There was some peculiarity in him — some element or bias in his composition that made him different from other men; but, on the other hand, there was an ardent solicitude to annul or reconcile this difference, and to prove himself to be, in fact, of absolutely the same cut and quality as all the rest of the world. Hence he was in a demonstrative, expository, or argumentative mood; he could not sit quiet in the face of a divergence between himself and his associates; he was incorrigibly strenuous to obliterate or harmonize the irreconcilable points between him and others; and since these points remained irreconcilable, he remained in a constant state of storm and stress on the subject.

It was impossible to help liking such a man at first sight; and I believe that no man in London society was more generally liked than Anthony Trollope. There was something pathetic in his

attitude as above indicated; and a fresh and boyish quality always invested him. His artlessness was boyish, and so were his acuteness and his transparent but somewhat belated good-sense. He was one of those rare persons who not only have no reserves, but who can afford to dispense with them. After he had shown you all he had in him, you would have seen nothing that was not gentlemanly, honest, and clean. He was a quick-tempered man, and the ardor and hurry of his temperament made him seem more so than he really was; but he was never more angry than he was forgiving and generous. He was hurt by little things, and little things pleased him; he was suspicious and perverse, but in a manner that rather endeared him to you than otherwise. Altogether, to a casual acquaintance, who knew nothing of his personal history, he was something of a paradox—an entertaining contradiction. The publication of his autobiography explained many things in his character that were open to speculation; and, indeed, the book is not only the most interesting and amusing that its author has ever written, but it places its subject before the reader more completely and comprehensively than most autobiographies do. This, however, is due much

less to any direct effort or intention on the writer's part, than to the unconscious self-revelation which meets the reader on every page. No narrative could be simpler, less artificial; and yet, everywhere, we read between the lines, and, so to speak, discover Anthony Trollope in spite of his efforts to discover himself to us.

The truth appears to be that the youthful Trollope, like a more famous fellow-novelist, began the world with more kicks than half-pence. His boyhood, he affirms, was as unhappy as that of a young gentleman could well be, owing to a mixture of poverty and gentle standing on his father's part, and, on his own, to "an utter lack of juvenile manhood"—whatever that may be. His father was a lawyer, who frightened away all his clients by his outrageous temper, and who encountered one mischance after another until he landed himself and his family in open bankruptcy; from which they were rescued, partly by death, which carried away four of them (including the old gentleman), and partly by Mrs. Trollope, who, at fifty years of age, brought out her famous book on America, and continued to make a fair income by literature (as she called it) until 1856, when, being seventy-six years old, and having produced

one hundred and fourteen volumes, she permitted herself to retire. This extraordinary lady, in her youth, cherished what her son calls "an emotional dislike to tyrants"; but when her American experience had made her acquainted with some of the seamy aspects of democracy, and especially after the aristocracy of her own country had begun to patronize her, she confessed the error of her early way, "and thought that archduchesses were sweet." But she was certainly a valiant and indefatigable woman, — "of all the people I have ever known," says her son, "the most joyous, or, at any rate, the most capable of joy"; and he adds that her best novels were written in 1834-35, when her husband and four of her six children were dying upstairs of consumption, and she had to divide her time between nursing them and writing. Assuredly, no son of hers need apprehend the reproach — "*Tydides melior matre*"; though Anthony, and his brother Thomas Adolphus, must, together, have run her pretty hard. The former remarks, with that terrible complacency in an awful fact which is one of his most noticeable and astounding traits, that the three of them "wrote more books than were probably ever before produced by a single family." The existence of a

few more such families could be consistent only with a generous enlargement of the British Museum.

The elder Trollope was a scholar, and to make scholars of his sons was one of his ruling ideas. Poor little Anthony endured no less than twelve mortal years of schooling — from the time he was seven until he was nineteen — and declares that, in all that time, he does not remember that he ever knew a lesson. “I have been flogged,” he says, “oftener than any other human being.” Nay, his troubles began before his school-days; for his father used to make him recite his infantile tasks to him while he was shaving, and obliged him to sit with his head inclined in such a manner “that he could pull my hair without stopping his razor or dropping his shaving-brush.” This is a depressing picture; and there are plenty more like it. Dr. Butler, the master of Harrow, meeting the poor little draggletail urchin in the yard, desired to know, in awful accents, how so dirty a boy dared to show himself near the school! “He must have known me, had he seen me as he was wont to see me, for he was in the habit of flogging me constantly. Perhaps,” adds his victim, “he did not recognize me by my face!” But it is

comforting to learn, in another place, that justice overtook the oppressor. "Dr. Butler only lived to be Dean of Peterborough; but his successor (Dr. Longley) became Archbishop of Canterbury." There is a great deal of Trollopian morality in the fate of these two men, the latter of whom "could not have said anything ill-natured if he had tried."

Black care, however, continued to sit behind the horseman with harrowing persistence. A certain Dr. Drury (another schoolmaster) punished him on suspicion of "some nameless horror," of which the unfortunate youngster happened to be innocent. When, afterward, the latter fact began to be obvious, "he whispered to me half a word that perhaps he had been wrong. But, with a boy's stupid slowness, I said nothing, and he had not the courage to carry reparation farther." The poverty of Anthony's father deprived the boy of all the external advantages that might have enabled him to take rank with his fellows: and his native awkwardness and sensitiveness widened the breach. "I had no friend to whom I could pour out my sorrows. I was big, awkward and ugly, and, I have no doubt, skulked about in a most unattractive manner. Something

of the disgrace of my school-days has clung to me all through life. When I have been claimed as school-fellow by some of those many hundreds who were with me either at Harrow or at Winchester, I have felt that I had no right to talk of things from most of which I was kept in estrangement. I was never a coward, but to make a stand against three hundred tyrants required a moral courage which I did not possess." Once, however, they pushed him too far, and he was driven to rebellion. "And then came a great fight—at the end of which my opponent had to be taken home to be cured." And then he utters the characteristic wish that some one, of the many who witnessed this combat, may still be left alive "who will be able to say that, in claiming this solitary glory of my school-days, I am making no false boast." The lonely, lugubrious little champion! One would almost have been willing to have received from him a black eye and a bloody nose, only to comfort his sad heart. It is delightful to imagine the terrific earnestness of that solitary victory: and I would like to know what boy it was (if any) who lent the unpopular warrior a knee and wiped his face.

After he got through his school-days, his family

being then abroad, he had an offer of a commission in an Austrian cavalry regiment; and he might have been a major-general or field-marshal at this day had his schooling made him acquainted with the French and German languages. Being, however, entirely ignorant of these, he was obliged to study them in order to his admission; and while he was thus employed, he received news of a vacant clerkship in the General Post-Office, with the dazzling salary of £90 a year. Needless to say that he jumped at such an opening, seeing before him a vision of a splendid civil and social career, at something over twenty pounds a quarter. But London, even fifty years ago, was a more expensive place than Anthony imagined. Moreover, the boy was alone in the wilderness of the city, with no one to advise or guide him. The consequence was that these latter days of his youth were as bad or worse than the beginning. In reviewing his plight at this period, he observes: "I had passed my life where I had seen gay things, but had never enjoyed them. There was no house in which I could habitually see a lady's face or hear a lady's voice. At the Post-Office I got credit for nothing, and was reckless. I hated my work, and, more than

all, I hated my idleness. Borrowings of money, sometimes absolute want, and almost constant misery, followed as a matter of course. I had a full conviction that my life was taking me down to the lowest pits—a feeling that I had been looked upon as an evil, an encumbrance, a useless thing, a creature of whom those connected with me had to be ashamed. Even my few friends were half-ashamed of me. I acknowledge the weakness of a great desire to be loved—a strong wish to be popular. No one had ever been less so.” Under these circumstances, he remarks that, although, no doubt, if the mind be strong enough, the temptation will not prevail, yet he is fain to admit that the temptation prevailed with him. He did not sit at home, after his return from the office, in the evening, to drink tea and read, but tramped out in the streets, and tried to see life and be jolly on £90 a year. He borrowed four pounds of a money-lender, to augment his resources, and found, after a few years, that he had paid him two hundred pounds for the accommodation. He met with every variety of absurd and disastrous adventure. The mother of a young woman with whom he had had an innocent flirtation in the country appeared one

day at his desk in the office, and called out before all the clerks, "Anthony Trollope, when are you going to marry my daughter?" On another occasion a sum of money was missing from the table of the director. Anthony was summoned. The director informed him of the loss — "and, by G—!" he continued, thundering his fist down on the table, "no one has been in the room but you and I." "Then, by G—!" cried Anthony, thundering *his* fist down upon something, "you have taken it!" This was very well; but the thing which Anthony had thumped happened to be, not a table, but a movable desk with an inkstand on it, and the ink flew up and deluged the face and shirt-front of the enraged director. Still another adventure was that of the Queen of Saxony and the Half-Crown; but the reader must investigate these matters for himself.

So far there has been nothing looking toward the novel-writer. But now we learn that from the age of fifteen to twenty-six Anthony kept a journal, which, he says, "convicted me of folly, ignorance, indiscretion, idleness, and conceit, but habituated me to the rapid use of pen and ink, and taught me how to express myself with facil-

ity." In addition to this, and more to the purpose, he had formed an odd habit. Living, as he was forced to do, so much to himself, if not by himself, he had to play, not with other boys, but with himself; and his favorite play was to conceive a tale, or series of fictitious events, and to carry it on, day after day, for months together, in his mind. "Nothing impossible was ever introduced, or violently improbable. I was my own hero, but I never became a king or a duke, still less an Antinoüs, or six feet high. But I was a very clever person, and beautiful young women used to be very fond of me. I learned in this way to live in a world outside the world of my own material life." This is pointedly, even touchingly, characteristic. Never, to the day of his death, did Mr. Trollope either see or imagine anything impossible, or violently improbable, in the world. This mortal plane of things never dissolved before his gaze and revealed the mysteries of absolute Being; his heavens were never rolled up as a scroll, and his earth had no bubbles as the water hath. He took things as he found them; and he never found them out. But if the light that never was on sea or land does not illuminate the writings of Mr. Trollope, there is generally

plenty of that other kind of light with which, after all, the average reader is more familiar, and which not a few, perhaps, prefer to the transcendental lustre. There is no modern novelist who has more clearly than Trollope defined to his own apprehension his own literary capabilities and limitations. He is thoroughly acquainted with both his fortes and his foibles ; and so sound is his good sense, that he is seldom beguiled into toiling with futile ambition after effects that are beyond him. His proper domain is a sufficiently wide one ; he is inimitably at home here ; and when he invites us there to visit him, we may be sure of getting good and wholesome entertainment. The writer's familiarity with his characters communicates itself imperceptibly to the reader ; there are no difficult or awkward introductions ; the toning of the picture (to use the painter's phrase) is unexceptionable ; and if it be rather tinted than colored, the tints are handled in a workmanlike manner. Again, few English novelists seem to possess so sane a comprehension of the modes of life and thought of the British aristocracy as Trollope. He has not only made a study of them from the observer's point of view, but he has reasoned them out intellectually. The figures are not vividly de-

fined; the realism is applied to events rather than to personages: we have the scene described for us but we do not look upon it. We should not recognize his characters if we saw them; but if we were told who they were, we should know, from their author's testimony, what were their characteristic traits and how they would act under given circumstances. The logical sequence of events is carefully maintained; nothing happens, either for good or for evil, other than might befall under the dispensations of a Providence no more unjust, and no more far-sighted, than Trollope himself. There is a good deal of the *a priori* principle in his method; he has made up his mind as to certain fundamental data, and thence develops or explains whatever complication comes up for settlement. But to range about unhampered by any theories, concerned only to examine all phenomena, and to report thereupon, careless of any considerations save those of artistic propriety, would have been vanity and striving after wind to Trollope, and derivatively so, doubtless, to his readers.

Considered in the abstract, it is a curious question what makes his novels interesting. The reader knows, in a sense, just what is in store for

him,—or, rather, what is not. There will be no astonishment, no curdling horror, no consuming suspense. There may be, perhaps, as many murders, forgeries, foundlings, abductions, and missing wills, in Trollope's novels as in any others; but they are not told about in a manner to alarm us; we accept them philosophically; there are paragraphs in our morning paper that excite us more. And yet they are narrated with art, and with dramatic effect. They are interesting, but not uncourteously—not exasperatingly so; and the strangest part of it is that the introductory and intermediate passages are no less interesting, under Trollope's treatment, than are the murders and forgeries. Not only does he never offend the modesty of nature,—he encourages her to be prudish, and trains her to such evenness and severity of demeanor that we never know when we have had enough of her. His touch is eminently civilizing; everything, from the episodes to the sentences, moves without hitch or creak: we never have to read a paragraph twice, and we are seldom sorry to have read it once.

Amusingly characteristic of Trollope is his treatment of his villains. His attitude toward them betrays no personal uncharitableness or

animosity, but the villain has a bad time of it just the same. Trollope places upon him a large, benevolent, but unyielding forefinger, and says to us: "Remark, if you please, how this inferior reptile squirms when pressure is applied to him. I will now augment the pressure. You observe that the squirmings increase in energy and complexity. Now, if you please, I will bear down yet a little harder. Do not be alarmed, madam; the reptile undoubtedly suffers, but the spectacle may do us some good, and you may trust me not to let him do you any harm. There!—Yes, evisceration by means of pressure is beyond question painful; but every one must have observed the benevolence of my forefinger during the operation; and I fancy even the subject of the experiment (were he in a condition to express his sentiments) would have admitted as much. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again very shortly. John, another reptile, please!" Upon the whole, it is much to Trollope's credit that he wrote somewhere about fifty long novels; and to the credit of the English people that they paid him three hundred and fifty thousand dollars for these novels — and read them!

But his success as a man of letters was still many years in the future. After seven years in the London office, he went to Ireland as assistant surveyor, and thenceforward he began to enjoy his business, and to get on in it. He was paid sixpence a mile, and he would ride forty miles a day. He rode to hounds, incidentally, whenever he got a chance, and he kept up the practice, with enthusiasm, to within a few years of his death. "It will, I think, be accorded to me," he says, "that I have ridden hard. I know very little about hunting; I am blind, very heavy, and I am now old; but I ride with a boy's energy, hating the roads, and despising young men who ride them; and I feel that life cannot give me anything better than when I have gone through a long run to the finish, keeping a place, not of glory, but of credit, among my juniors." Riding, working, having a jolly time, and gradually increasing his income, he lived until 1842, when he became engaged; and he was married on June 11, 1844. "I ought to name that happy day," he declares, "as the commencement of my better life." It was at about this date, also, that he began and finished, not without delay and procrastination, his first novel. Curiously enough, he affirms that

he did not doubt his own intellectual sufficiency to write a readable novel: "What I did doubt was my own industry, and the chances of a market." Never, surely, was self-distrust more unfounded. As for the first novel, he sent it to his mother, to dispose of as best she could; and it never brought him anything, except a perception that it was considered by his friends to be "an unfortunate aggravation of the family disease." During the ensuing ten years, this view seemed to be not unreasonable, for, in all that time, though he worked hard, he earned by literature no more than £55. But, between 1857 and 1860, he received for various novels, from £100 to £1000 each; and thereafter, £3000 or more was his regular price for a story in three volumes. As he maintained his connection with the post-office until 1867, he was in receipt of an income of £4500, "of which I spent two-thirds and put by one." We should be doing an injustice to Mr. Trollope to omit these details, which he gives so frankly; for, as he early informs us, "my first object in taking to literature was to make an income on which I and those belonging to me might live in comfort." Nor will he let us forget that novel-writing, to him, was not so much an

art, or even a profession, as a trade, in which all that can be asked of a man is that he shall be honest and punctual, turning out good average work, and the more the better. "The great secret consists in" — in what? — why, "in acknowledging myself to be bound to rules of labor similar to those which an artisan or mechanic is forced to obey." There may be, however, other incidental considerations. "I have ever thought of myself as a preacher of sermons, and my pulpit as one I could make both salutary and agreeable to my audience"; and he tells us that he has used some of his novels for the expression of his political and social convictions. Again — "The novelist must please, and he must teach; a good novel should be both realistic and sensational in the highest degree." He says that he sees no reason why two or three good novels should not be written at the same time; and that, for his own part, he was accustomed to write two hundred and fifty words every fifteen minutes, by the watch, during his working hours. Nor does he mind letting us know that when he sits down to write a novel, he neither knows nor cares how it is to end. And finally, one is a little startled to hear him say, epigrammatically, that a writer

should not have to tell a story, but should have a story to tell. Beyond a doubt, Anthony Trollope is something of a paradox.

The world has long ago passed its judgment on his stories, but it is interesting, all the same, to note his own opinion of them; and though never arrogant, he is generally tolerant, if not genial. "A novel should be a picture of common life, enlivened by humor and sweetened by pathos. I have never fancied myself to be a man of genius," he says; but again, with strange imperviousness, "A small daily task, if it be daily, will beat the labors of a spasmodic Hercules." Beat them, how? Why, in quantity. But how about quality? Is the travail of a work of art the same thing as the making of a pair of shoes? Emerson tells us that —

"Ever the words of the gods resound,
But the porches of man's ear
Seldom, in this low life's round,
Are unsealed, that he may hear."

No one disputes, however, that you may hear the tapping of the cobbler's hammer at any time.

To the view of the present writer, how much good soever Mr. Trollope may have done as a preacher and moralist, he has done great harm to

English fictitious literature by his novels; and it need only be added, in this connection, that his methods and results in novel-writing seem best to be explained by that peculiar mixture of separateness and commonplaceness which we began by remarking in him. The separateness has given him the standpoint whence he has been able to observe and describe the commonplaceness with which (in spite of his separateness) he is in vital sympathy.

But Trollope the man is the abundant and consoling compensation for Trollope the novelist; and one wishes that his books might have died, and he lived on indefinitely. It is charming to read of his life in London after his success in the *Cornhill Magazine*. "Up to that time I had lived very little among men. It was a festival to me to dine at the 'Garriek.' I think I became popular among those with whom I associated. I have ever wished to be liked by those around me — a wish that during the first half of my life was never gratified." And, again, in summing up his life, he says: "I have betrayed no woman. Wine has brought to me no sorrow. It has been the companionship, rather than the habit of smoking that I loved. I have never desired to win money, and I have lost none. To enjoy

the excitement of pleasure, but to be free from its vices and ill-effects—to have the sweet, and to leave the bitter untasted—that has been my study. I will not say that I have never scorched a finger; but I carry no ugly wounds.”

A man who, at the end of his career, could make such a profession as this—who felt the need of no further self-vindication than this—such a man, whatever may have been his accountability to the muse of Fiction, is a credit to England and to human nature, and deserves to be numbered among the darlings of mankind. It was an honor to be called his friend; and what his idea of friendship was, may be learned from the passage in which he speaks of his friend Millais—with the quotation of which this paper may fitly be concluded:—

“To see him has always been a pleasure; his voice has always been a sweet sound in my ears. Behind his back I have never heard him praised without joining the eulogist; I have never heard a word spoken against him without opposing the censurer. These words, should he ever see them, will come to him from the grave, and will tell him of my regard—as one living man never tells another.”

CHAPTER VII.

MR. MALLOCK'S MISSING SCIENCE.

BEFORE criticising Mr. Mallock's little essay, let us summarize its contents. The author begins with an analysis of the aims, the principles, and the "pseudo-science" of modern Democracy. Having established the evil and destructive character of these things, he sets himself to show by logical argument that the present state of social inequality, which Democrats wish to disturb, is a natural and wholesome state; that the continuance of civilization is dependent upon it; and that it could only be overturned by effecting a radical change—not in human institutions, but in human character. The desire for inequality is inherent in the human character; and in order to prove this statement, Mr. Mallock proceeds to affirm that there is such a thing as a science of human character; that of this science he is the discoverer; and that the application of this

science to the question at issue will demonstrate the integrity of Mr. Mallock's views, and the infirmity of all others. In the ensuing chapters the application is made, and at the end the truth of the proposition is declared established.

This is the outline; but let us note some of the details. Mr. Mallock asserts (Chap. I.) that the aim of modern Democracy is to overturn "all that has hitherto been connected with high-breeding or with personal culture"; and that "to call the Democrats a set of thieves and confiscators is merely to apply names to them which they have no wish to repudiate." He maintains (Chap. II.) that the first and foremost of the Democratic principles is "that the perfection of society involves social equality"; and that "the luxury of one man means the deprivation of another." He credits the Democrats with arguing that "the means of producing equality are a series of changes in existing institutions"; that "by changing the institutions of a society we are able to change its structure"; that "the cause of the distribution of wealth" is "laws and forms of government"; and that "the wealthy classes, as such, are connected with wealth in no other way but as the accidental appropriators of it." In

his third chapter he tells us that "the entire theory of modern Democracy . . . depends on the doctrine that the cause of wealth is labor"; that Democrats believe we "may count on a man to labor, just as surely as we may count on a man to eat"; that "the man who does not labor is supported by the man who does"; and that the pseudo-science of modern Democracy "starts with the conception of man as containing in himself a natural tendency to labor." And here Mr. Mallock's statement of his opponent's position ends.

In the fourth chapter we are brought within sight of "The Missing Substitute." "A man's character," we are told, "divides into his desires on the one hand, and his capacities on the other"; and it is observed that "various as are men's desires and capacities, yet if talent and ambition commanded no more than idleness and stupidity, all men practically would be idle and stupid." "Men's capacities," we are reminded, "are practically unequal, because they develop their own potential inequalities; they do this because they desire to place themselves in unequal external circumstances,—which result the condition of society renders possible."

Coming now to the Science of Human Character itself, we find that it "asserts a permanent relationship to exist between human character and social inequality"; and the author then proceeds at some length to show how near Herbert Spencer, Buckle, and other social and economic philosophers, came to stumbling over his missing science, and yet avoided doing so. Nevertheless, argues Mr. Mallock, "if there be such a thing as a social science, or a science of history, there must be also a science of biography"; and this science, though it "cannot show us how any special man will act in the future," yet, if "any special action be given us, it can show us that it was produced by a special motive; and conversely, that if the special motive be wanting, the special action is sure to be wanting also." As an example how to distinguish between those traits of human character which are available for scientific purposes, and those which are not, Mr. Mallock instances a mob, which temporarily acts together for some given purpose: the individual differences of character then "cancel out," and only points of agreement are left. Proceeding to the sixth chapter, he applies himself to setting to rest the scruples of those who find something cynical in

the idea that the desire for Inequality is compatible with a respectable form of human character. It is true, he says, that man does not live by bread alone; but he denies that he means to say "that all human activity is motivated by the desire for inequality"; he would assert that only "of all productive labor, except the lowest." The only actions independent of the desire for inequality, however, are those performed in the name of art, science, philanthropy, and religion; and even in these cases, so far as the actions are not motivated by a desire for inequality, they are not of productive use; and *vice versa*. In the remaining chapters, which we must dismiss briefly, we meet with such statements as "labor has been produced by an artificial creation of want of food, and by then supplying the want on certain conditions"; that "civilization has always been begun by an oppressive minority"; that "progress depends on certain gifted individuals," and therefore social equality would destroy progress; that inequality influences production by existing as an object of desire and as a means of pressure; that the evils of poverty are caused by want, not by inequality; and that, finally, equality is not the goal of progress, but of retrogression; that inequality is not

an accidental evil of civilization, but the cause of its development; the distance of the poor from the rich is not the cause of the former's poverty as distinct from riches, but of their civilized competence as distinct from barbarism; and that the apparent changes in the direction of equality recorded in history, have been, in reality, none other than "a more efficient arrangement of inequalities."

Now, let us inquire what all this ingenious prattle about Inequality and the Science of Human Character amounts to. What does Mr. Mallock expect? His book has been out six months, and still Democracy exists. But does any such Democracy as he combats exist, or could it conceivably exist? Have his investigations of the human character failed to inform him that one of the strongest natural instincts of man's nature is immovably opposed to anything like an equal distribution of existing wealth?—because whoever owns anything, if it be only a coat, wishes to keep it; and that wish makes him aware that his fellow-man will wish to keep, and will keep at all hazards, whatever things belong to him. What Democrats really desire is to enable all men to have

an equal chance to obtain wealth, instead of being, as is largely the case now, hampered and kept down by all manner of legal and arbitrary restrictions. As for the "desire for Inequality," it seems to exist chiefly in Mr. Mallock's imagination. Who does desire it? Does the man who "strikes" for higher wages desire it? Let us see. A strike, to be successful, must be not an individual act, but the act of a large body of men, all demanding the same thing—an increase in wages. If they gain their end, no difference has taken place in their mutual position; and their position in regard to their employers is altered only in that an approach has been made toward greater equality with the latter. And so in other departments of human effort: the aim, which the man who wishes to better his position sets before himself, is not to rise head and shoulders above his equals, but to equal his superiors. And as to the Socialist schemes for the reorganization of society, they imply, at most, a wish to see all men start fair in the race of life, the only advantages allowed being not those of rank or station, but solely of innate capacity. And the reason the Socialist desires this is, because he believes, rightly or wrongly, that many inefficient men are, at pres-

ent, only artificially protected from betraying their inefficiency; and that many efficient men are only artificially prevented from showing their efficiency; and that the fair start he proposes would not result in keeping all men on a dead level, but would simply put those in command who had a genuine right to be there.

But this is taxing Mr. Mallock too seriously: he has not written in earnest. But, as his uncle, Mr. Froude, said, when reading "The New Republic,"—"The rogue is clever!" He has read a good deal, he has an active mind, a smooth redundancy of expression, a talent for caricature, a fondness for epigram and paradox, a useful shallowness, and an amusing impudence. He has no practical knowledge of mankind, no experience of life, no commanding point of view, and no depth of insight. He has no conception of the meaning and quality of the problems with whose exterior aspects he so prettily trifles. He has constructed a Science of Human Character without for one moment being aware that, for instance, human character and human nature are two distinct things; and that, furthermore, the one is everything that the other is not. As little is he

conscious of the significance of the words "society" and "civilization"; nor can he explain whether, or why, either of them is desirable or undesirable, good or bad. He has never done, and (judging from his published works) we do not believe him capable of doing, any analytical or constructive thinking; at most, as in the present volume, he turns a few familiar objects upside down, and airily invites his audience to believe that he has thereby earned the name of Discoverer, if not of Creator.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEODORE WINTHROP'S WRITINGS.

ON an accessible book-shelf in my library, stand side by side four volumes whose contents I once knew by heart, and which, after the lapse of twenty years, are yet tolerably distinct in my memory. These are stoutly bound in purple muslin, with a stamp, of Persian design apparently, on the centre of each cover. They are stained and worn, and the backs have faded to a brownish hue, from exposure to the light, and a leaf in one of the volumes has been torn across; but the paper and the sewing and the clear bold type are still as serviceable as ever. The books seem to have been made to last,—to stand a great deal of reading. Contrasted with the æsthetically designed covers one sees nowadays, they would be considered inexcusably ugly, and the least popular novelist of our time would protest against having his lucubrations presented to the public in such plain attire. Nevertheless, on

turning to the title-pages, you may see imprinted, on the first, "Fourteenth Edition"; on the second, "Twelfth Edition"; and on the others, indications somewhat less magnificent, but still evidence of very exceptional circulation. The date they bear is that of the first years of our civil war; and the first published of them is prefaced by a biographical memoir of the author, written by his friend George William Curtis. This memoir was originally printed in the *Atlantic Monthly*, two or three months after the death of its subject, Theodore Winthrop.

For these books,—three novels, and one volume of records of travel,—came from his hand, though they did not see the light until after he had passed beyond the sphere of authors and publishers. At that time, the country was in an exalted and heroic mood, and the men who went to fight its battles were regarded with a personal affection by no means restricted to their personal acquaintances. Their names were on all lips, and those of them who fell were mourned by multitudes instead of by individuals. Winthrop's historic name, and the influential position of some of his nearest friends, would have sufficed to bring into unusual prominence his brief career

and his fate as a soldier, even had his intrinsic qualities and character been less honorable and winning than they were. But he was a type of a young American such as America is proud to own. He was high-minded, refined, gifted, handsome. I recollect a portrait of him published soon after his death,—a photograph, I think, from a crayon drawing; an eloquent, sensitive, rather melancholy, but manly and courageous face, with grave eyes, the mouth veiled by a long moustache. It was the kind of countenance one would wish our young heroes to have. When, after the catastrophe at Great Bethel, it became known that Winthrop had left writings behind him, it would have been strange indeed had not every one felt a desire to read them.

Moreover, he had already begun to be known as a writer. It was during 1860, I believe, that a story of his, in two instalments, entitled "Love on Skates," appeared in the "Atlantic." It was a brilliant and graphic celebration of the art of skating, engrafted on a love-tale as full of romance and movement as could be desired. Admirably told it was, as I recollect it; crisp with the healthy vigor of American wintry atmosphere, with bright

touches of humor, and, here and there, passages of sentiment, half tender, half playful. It was something new in our literature, and gave promise of valuable work to come. But the writer was not destined to fulfil the promise. In the next year, from the camp of his regiment, he wrote one or two admirable descriptive sketches, touching upon the characteristic points of the campaigning life which had just begun; but, before the last of these had become familiar to the "Atlantic's" readers, it was known that it would be the last. Theodore Winthrop had been killed.

He was only in his thirty-third year. He was born in New Haven, and had entered Yale College with the class of '48. The *ΔΚΕ* Fraternity was, I believe, founded in the year of his admission, and he must, therefore, have been among its earliest members. He was distinguished as a scholar, and the traces of his classic and philosophical acquirements are everywhere visible in his books. During the five or six years following his graduation, he travelled abroad, and in the South and West; a wild frontier life had great attractions for him, as he who reads "John Brent" and "The Canoe and the Saddle" need not be told. He tried his hand at various things, but

could settle himself to no profession,—an inability which would have excited no remark in England, which has had time to recognize the value of men of leisure, as such; but which seems to have perplexed some of his friends in this country. Be that as it may, no one had reason to complain of lack of energy and promptness on his part when patriotism revealed a path to Winthrop. He knew that the time for him had come; but he had also known that the world is not yet so large that all men, at all times, can lay their hands upon the work that is suitable for them to do.

Let us, however, return to the novels. They appear to have been written about 1856 and 1857, when their author was twenty-eight or nine years old. Of the order in which they were composed I have no record; but, judging from internal evidence, I should say that “Edwin Brothertoft” came first, then “Cecil Dreeme,” and then “John Brent.” The style, and the quality of thought, in the latter is more mature than in the others, and its tone is more fresh and wholesome. In the order of publication, “Cecil Dreeme” was first, and seems also to have been most widely read; then “John Brent,” and then “Edwin Brother-

toft," the scene of which was laid in the last century. I remember seeing, at the house of James T. Fields, their publisher, the manuscripts of these books, carefully bound and preserved. They were written on large ruled letter-paper, and the handwriting was very large, and had a considerable slope. There were scarcely any corrections or erasures; but it is possible that Winthrop made clean copies of his stories after composing them. Much of the dialogue, especially, bears evidence of having been revised, and of the author's having perhaps sacrificed ease and naturalness, here and there, to the craving for conciseness which has been one of the chief stumbling-blocks in the way of our young writers. He wished to avoid heaviness and "padding," and went to the other extreme. He wanted to cut loose from the old, stale traditions of composition, and to produce something which should be new, not only in character and significance, but in manner of presentation. He had the ambition of the young Hafiz, who professed a longing to "tear down this tiresome old sky." But the old sky has good reasons for being what and where it is, and young radicals finally come to perceive that, regarded from the proper point of view, and in

the right spirit, it is not so tiresome after all. Divine Revelation itself can be expressed in very moderate and commonplace language; and if one's thoughts are worth thinking, they are worth clothing in adequate and serene attire.

But "culture," and literature with it, have made such surprising advances of late, that we are apt to forget how really primitive and unenlightened the generation was in which Winthrop wrote. Imagine a time when Mr. Henry James, Jr., and Mr. W. D. Howells had not been heard of; when Bret Harte was still hidden below the horizon of the far West; when no one suspected that a poet named Aldrich would ever write a story called "Marjorie Daw"; when, in England, "Adam Bede" and his successors were unborn; — a time of antiquity so remote, in short, that the mere possibility of a discussion upon the relative merit of the ideal and the realistic methods of fiction was undreamt of! What had an unfortunate novelist of those days to fall back upon? Unless he wished to expatriate himself, and follow submissively in the well worn steps of Dickens, Thackeray, and Trollope, the only models he could look to were Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, James Fenimore Cooper, and Nathan-

iel Hawthorne. "Elsie Venner" had scarcely made its appearance at that date. Irving and Cooper were, on the other hand, somewhat antiquated. Poe and Hawthorne were men of very peculiar genius, and, however deep the impression they have produced on our literature, they have never had, because they never can have, imitators. As for the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," she was a woman in the first place, and, in the second place, she sufficiently filled the field she had selected. A would-be novelist, therefore, possessed of ambition, and conscious of not being his own father or grandfather, saw an untrodden space before him, into which he must plunge without support and without guide. No wonder if, at the outset, he was a trifle awkward and ill-at-ease, and, like a raw recruit under fire, appeared affected from the very desire he felt to look unconcerned. It is much to his credit that he essayed the venture at all; and it is plain to be seen that, with each forward step he took, his self-possession and simplicity increased. If time had been given him, there is no reason to doubt that he might have been standing at the head of our champions of fiction to-day.

But time was not given him, and his work, like

all other work, if it is to be judged at all, must be judged on its merits. He excelled most in passages descriptive of action; and the more vigorous and momentous the action, the better, invariably, was the description; he rose to the occasion, and was not defeated by it. Partly for this reason, "Cecil Dreeme," the most popular of his books, seems to me the least meritorious of them all. The story has little movement; it stagnates round Chrysalis College. The love intrigue is morbid and unwholesome, and the characters (which are seldom Winthrop's strong point) are more than usually artificial and unnatural. The *dramatis personæ* are, indeed, little more than moral or immoral principles incarnate. There is no growth in them, no human variableness or complexity; it is "Every Man in his Humor" over again, with the humor left out. Densdeth is an impossible rascal; Churm, a scarcely more possible Rhadamanthine saint. Cecil Dreeme herself never fully recovers from the ambiguity forced upon her by her masculine attire; and Emma Denman could never have been both what we are told she was, and what she is described as being. As for Robert Byng, the supposed narrator of the tale, his name seems to have been given him in

order wantonly to increase the confusion caused by the contradictory traits with which he is accredited. The whole atmosphere of the story is unreal, fantastic, obscure. An attempt is made to endow our poor, raw New York with something of the stormy and ominous mystery of the immemorial cities of Europe. The best feature of the book (morbidness aside) is the construction of the plot, which shows ingenuity and an artistic perception of the value of mystery and moral compensation. It recalls, in some respects, the design of Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance,"—that is, had the latter never been written, the former would probably have been written differently. In spite of its faults, it is an interesting book, and, to the critical eye, there are in almost every chapter signs that indicate the possession of no ordinary gifts on the author's part. But it may be doubted whether the special circumstances under which it was published had not something to do with its wide popularity. I imagine "John Brent" to have been really much more popular, in the better sense; it was read and liked by a higher class of readers. It is young ladies and school-girls who swell the numbers of an "edition," and hence the difficulty

in arguing from this as to the literary merit of the book itself.

"Edwin Brothertoft," though somewhat disjointed in construction, and jerky in style, is yet a picturesque and striking story ; and the gallop of the hero across country and through the night to rescue from the burning house the woman who had been false to him, is vigorously described, and gives us some foretaste of the thrill of suspense and excitement we feel in reading the story of the famous "Gallop of three" in "John Brent." The writer's acquaintance with the history of the period is adequate, and a romantic and chivalrous tone is preserved throughout the volume. It is worth noting that, in all three of Winthrop's novels, a horse bears a part in the crisis of the tale. In "Cecil Dreeme" it is Churm's pair of trotters that convey the party of rescuers to the private Insane Asylum in which Densdeth had confined the heroine. In "Edwin Brothertoft," it is one of Edwin's renowned breed of white horses that carries him through almost insuperable obstacles to his goal. In "John Brent," the black stallion, Don Fulano, who is throughout the chief figure in the book, reaches his apogee in the tremendous race across the plains and down the rocky gorge of the

mountains, to where the abductors of the heroine are just about to pitch their camp at the end of their day's journey. The motive is fine and artistic, and, in each of the books, these incidents are as good as, or better than, anything else in the narrative.

"John Brent" is, in fact, full enough of merit to more than redeem its defects. The self-consciousness of the writer is less noticeable than in the other works, and the effort to be epigrammatic, short, sharp, and "telling" in style, is considerably modified. The interest is lively, continuous, and cumulative; and there is just enough tragedy in the story to make the happy ending all the happier. It was a novel and adventurous idea to make a horse the hero of a tale, and the manner in which the idea is carried out more than justifies the hazard. Winthrop, as we know, was an ideal horseman, and knows what he is writing about. He contrives to realize Don Fulano for us, in spite of the almost supernatural powers and intelligence that he ascribes to the gallant animal. One is willing to stretch a point of probability when such a dashing and inspiring end is in view. In the present day we are getting a little tired of being brought to account, at every

turn, by Old Prob., who tyrannizes over literature quite as much as over the weather. Theodore Winthrop's inspiration, in this instance at least, was strong and genuine enough to enable him to feel what he was telling as the truth, and therefore it produces an effect of truth upon the reader. How distinctly every incident of that ride remains stamped on the memory, even after so long an interval as has elapsed since it was written! And I recollect that one of the youthful devourers of this book, who was of an artistic turn, was moved to paint three little water-color pictures of the Gallop; the first showing the three horses,—the White, the Gray, and the Black, scouring across the prairie, towards the barrier of mountains behind which the sun was setting; the second depicting Don Fulano, with Dick Wade and John Brent on his back, plunging down the gorge upon the abductors, one of whom had just pulled the trigger of his rifle; while the third gives the scene in which the heroic horse receives his death-wound in carrying the fugitive across the creek away from his pursuers. At this distance of time, I am unable to bear any testimony as to the technical value of the little pictures; I am inclined to fancy that they would have to be taken *cum grano*

amoris, as they certainly were executed *con amore*. But, however that may be, the instance (which was doubtless only one of many analogous to it) shows that Winthrop possessed the faculty of stimulating and electrifying the imagination of his readers, which all our recent improvements in the art and artifice of composition have not made too common, and for which, if for nothing else, we might well feel indebted to him.

CHAPTER IX.

EMERSON AS AN AMERICAN.

It is not with Americans as with other peoples. Our position is more vague and difficult, because it is not primarily related to the senses. I can easily find out where England or Prussia is, and recognize an Englishman or German when we meet; but we Americans are not, to the same extent as these, limited by geographical and physical boundaries. The origin of America was not like that of the European nations; the latter were born after the flesh, but we after the spirit. It is of the first consequence to them that their frontiers should be defended, and their nationality kept distinct. But, though I esteem highly all our innumerable square miles of East and West, North and South, and our Pacific and Atlantic coasts, I cannot help deeming them quite a secondary consideration. If America is not a great deal more than these United States, then the United States are no better than a penal

colony. It is convenient, no doubt, for a great idea to find a great embodiment—a suitable incarnation and stage; but the idea does not depend upon these things. It is an accidental—or, I would rather say, a Providential—matter that the Puritans came to New England, or that Columbus discovered the continent in time for them; but it has always happened that when a soul is born it finds a body ready fitted to it. The body, however, is an instrument merely; it enables the spirit to take hold of its mortal life, just as the hilt enables us to grasp the sword. If the Puritans had not come to New England, still the spirit that animated them would have lived, and made itself a place somehow. And, in fact, how many Puritans, for how many ages previous, had been trying to find standing-room in the world, and failed! They called themselves by many names; their voices were heard in many countries; the time had not yet come for them to be born—to touch their earthly inheritance; but, meantime, the latent impetus was accumulating, and the Mayflower was driven across the Atlantic by it at last. Nor is this all—the Mayflower is sailing still between the old world and the new. Every day it brings new settlers, if not to our

material harbors — to our Boston Bay, our Castle Garden, our Golden Gate — at any rate, to our mental ports and wharves. We cannot take up a European newspaper without finding an American idea in it. It is said that a great many of our countrymen take the steamer to England every summer. But they come back again; and they bring with them many who come to stay. I do not refer specially to the occupants of the steerage — the literal emigrants. One cannot say much about them — they may be Americans or not, as it turns out. But England and the continent are full of Americans who were born there, and many of whom will die there. Sometimes they are better Americans than the New Yorker or the Bostonian who lives in Beacon Street or the Bowery and votes in the elections. They may be born and reside where they please, but they belong to us, and, in the better sense, they are among us. Broadway and Washington Street, Vermont and Colorado extend all over Europe. Russia is covered with them; she tries to shove them away to Siberia, but in vain. We call mountains and prairies solid facts; but the geography of the mind is infinitely more stubborn. I dare say there are a great many oblique-

eyed, pig-tailed New Englanders in the Celestial Empire. They may never have visited these shores, or even heard of them; but what of that? They think our thought—they have apprehended our idea, and, by and by, they or their heirs will cause it to prevail.

It is useless for us to hide our heads in the grass and refuse to rise to the height of our occasion. We are here as the realization of a truth—the fulfilment of a prophecy; we must attest a new departure in the moral and intellectual development of the human race; for whichever of us does not, must suffer annihilation. If I deny my birthright as an American, I shall disappear and not be missed, for an American will take my place. It is not altogether a luxurious position to find yourself in. You cannot sit still and hold your hands. All manner of hard and unpleasant things are expected of you, which you neglect at your peril. It is like the old fable of the mermaid. She loved a mortal youth, and, in order that she might win his affection, she prayed that she might have the limbs and feet of a human maiden. Her prayer was answered, and she met her prince; but every step she took was as if she trod on razors. It is a fine thing to sit in your

chair and reflect on being an American ; but when you have to rise up and do an American's duty before the world—how sharp the razors are !

Of course, we do not always endure the test ; the flesh and blood on this side of the planet is not, so far as I have observed, of a quality essentially different from that on the other. Possibly our population is too many for us. Out of fifty million people it would be strange if here and there one appeared who was not at all points a hero. Indeed, I am sometimes tempted to think that that little band of original Mayflower Pilgrims has not greatly multiplied since their disembarkation. However it may be with their bodily offspring, their spiritual progeny are not invariably found in the chair of the Governor or on the floor of the Senate. What are these Irish fellow-creatures doing here ? Well, Bridget serves us in the kitchen ; but Patrick is more helpful yet ; he goes to the legislature, and is the servant of the people at large. It is very obliging of him ; but turn and turn about is fair play ; and it would be no more than justice were we, once in a while, to take off our coat and serve Patrick in the same way.

When we get into a tight place we are apt to try to slip out of it under some plea of a European precedent. But it used to be supposed that it was precisely European precedents that we came over here to avoid. I am not profoundly versed in political economy, nor is this the time or place to discuss its principles; but, as regards protection, for example, I can conceive that there may be arguments against it as well as for it. Emerson used to say that the way to conquer the foreign artisan was not to kill him but to beat his work. He also pointed out that the money we made out of the European wars, at the beginning of this century, had the result of bringing the impoverished population of those countries down upon us in the shape of emigrants. They shared our crops and went on the poor-rates, and so we did not gain so much after all. One cannot help wishing that America would assume the loftiest possible ground in her political and commercial relations. With all due respect to the sagacity and ability of our ruling demagogues, I should not wish them to be quoted as typical Americans. The domination of such persons has an effect which is by no means measurable by their personal acts. What they can do

is of infinitesimal importance. But the mischief is that they incline every one of us to believe, as Emerson puts it, in two gods. They make the morality of Wall Street and the White House seem to be a different thing from that of our parlors and nurseries. "He may be a little shady on 'change," we say, "but he is a capital fellow when you know him." But if he is a capital fellow when I know him, then I shall never find much fault with his professional operations, and shall end, perhaps, by allowing him to make some investments for me. Why should not I be a capital fellow too—and a fellow of capital, to boot! I can endure public opprobrium with tolerable equanimity so long as it remains public. It is the private cold looks that trouble me.

In short, we may speak of America in two senses—either meaning the America that actually meets us at the street corners and in the newspapers, or the ideal America—America as it ought to be. They are not the same thing; and, at present, there seems to be a good deal more of the former than of the latter. And yet, there is a connection between them; the latter has made the former possible. We sometimes see a great crowd drawn together by proclamation, for some

noble purpose — to decide upon a righteous war, or to pass a just decree. But the people on the outskirts of the crowd, finding themselves unable to hear the orators, and their time hanging idle on their hands, take to throwing stones, knocking off hats, or, perhaps, picking pockets. They may have come to the meeting with as patriotic or virtuous intentions as the promoters themselves; nay, under more favorable circumstances, they might themselves have become promoters. Virtue and patriotism are not private property; at certain times any one may possess them. And, on the other hand, we have seen examples enough, of late, of persons of the highest respectability and trust turning out, all at once, to be very sorry scoundrels. A man changes according to the person with whom he converses; and though the outlook is rather sordid to-day, we have not forgotten that during the Civil War the air seemed full of heroism. So that these two Americas — the real and the ideal — far apart though they may be in one sense, may, in another sense, be as near together as our right hand to our left. In a greater or less degree, they exist side by side in each one of us. But civil wars do not come every day; nor can we wish them to, even to show us

once more that we are worthy of our destiny. We must find some less expensive and quieter method of reminding ourselves of that. And of such methods, none, perhaps, is better than to review the lives of Americans who were truly great; to ask what their country meant to them; what they wished her to become; what virtues and what vices they detected in her. Passion may be generous, but passion cannot last; and when it is over, we are cold and indifferent again. But reason and example reach us when we are calm and passive; and what they inculcate is more likely to abide. At least, it will be only evil passion that can cast it out.

I have said that many a true American is doubtless born, and lives, abroad; but that does not prevent Emerson from having been born here. So far as the outward accidents of generation and descent go, he could not have been more American than he was. Of course, one prefers that it should be so. A rare gem should be fitly set. A noble poem should be printed with the fairest type of the Riverside Press, and upon fine paper with wide margins. It helps us to believe in ourselves to be told that Emerson's ancestry was not only Puritan, but clerical; that the central and

vital thread of the idea that created us, ran through his heart. The nation, and even New England, Massachusetts, Boston, have many traits that are not found in him ; but there is nothing in him that is not a refinement, a sublimation and concentration of what is good in them ; and the selection and grouping of the elements are such that he is a typical figure. Indeed, he is all type ; which is the same as saying that there is nobody like him. And, mentally, he produces the impression of being all force ; in his writings, his mind seems to have acted immediately, without natural impediment or friction ; as if a machine should be run that was not hindered by the contact of its parts. As he was physically lean and narrow of figure, and his face nothing but so many features welded together, so there was no adipose tissue in his thought. It is pure, clear, and accurate, and has the fault of dryness ; but often moves in forms of exquisite beauty. It is not adhesive ; it sticks to nothing, nor anything to it ; after ranging through all the various philosophies of the world, it comes out as clean and characteristic as ever. It has numberless affinities, but no adhesion ; it does not even adhere to itself. There are many separate statements in

any one of his essays which present no logical continuity; but although this fact has caused great anxiety to many disciples of Emerson, it never troubled him. It was the inevitable result of his method of thought. Wandering at will in the flower-garden of religious and moral philosophy, it was his part to pluck such blossoms as he saw were beautiful; not to find out their botanical interconnection. He would afterward arrange them, for art or harmony's sake, according to their color or their fragrance; but it was not his affair to go any farther in their classification.

This intuitive method of his, however little it may satisfy those who wish to have all their thinking done for them, who desire not only to have given to them all the cities of the earth, but also to have straight roads built for them from one to the other, carries with it its own justification. "There is but one reason," is Emerson's saying; and again and again does he prove without proving it. We confess, over and over, that the truth which he asserts is indeed a truth. Even his own variations from the truth, when he is betrayed into them, serve to confirm the rule. For these are seldom or never intuitions at first hand — pure intuitions; but, as it were, intuitions

from previous intuitions — deductions. The form of statement is the same, but the source is different; they are from Emerson, instead of from the Absolute; tinted, not colorless. They show a mental bias, very slight, but redeeming him back to humanity. We love him the more for them, because they indicate that for him, too, there was a choice of ways, and that he must struggle and watch to choose the right.

We are so much wedded to systems, and so accustomed to connect a system with a man, that the absence of system, either explicit or implicit, in Emerson, strikes us as a defect. And yet truth has no system, nor the human mind. This philosopher maintains one, that another thesis. Both are true essentially, and yet there seems a contradiction between them. We cannot bear to be illogical, and so we enlist some under this banner, some under that. By so doing we sacrifice to consistency at least the half of truth. Thence we come to examine our intuitions, and ask them, not whether they are true in themselves, but what are their tendencies. If it turn out that they will lead us to stultify some past conclusion to which we stand committed, we drop them like hot coals. To Emerson, this behavior

appeared the nakedest personal vanity. Recognizing that he was finite, he could not desire to be consistent. If he saw to-day that one thing was true, and to-morrow that its opposite was true, was it for him to elect which of the two truths should have his preference? No; to reject either would be to reject all; it belonged to God alone to reconcile these contradictions. Between infinite and finite can be no ratio; and the consistency of the Creator implies the inconsistency of the creature.

Emerson's Americanism, therefore, was Americanism in its last and purest analysis, which is giving him high praise, and to America great hope. But I do not mean to pay him, who was so full of modesty and humility, the ungrateful compliment of holding him up as the permanent American ideal. It is his tendencies, his quality, that are valuable, and only in a minor, incipient degree his actual results. All human results must be strictly limited, and according to the epoch and outlook. Emerson does not solve for all time the problem of the universe; he solves nothing; but he does what is far more useful—he gives a direction and an impetus to lofty human endeavor. He does not anticipate the les-

sons and the discipline of the ages, but he shows us how to deal with circumstances in such a manner as to secure the good instead of the evil influence. New conditions, fresh discoveries, unexpected horizons opening before us, will, no doubt, soon carry us beyond the scope of Emerson's surmise; but we shall not so easily improve upon his aim and attitude. In the spaces beyond the stars there may be marvels such as it has not entered into the mind of man to conceive; but there, as here, the right way to look will still be upward, and the right aspiration be still toward humbleness and charity.

I have just spoken of Emerson's absence of system; but his writings have nevertheless a singular coherence, by virtue of the single-hearted motive that has inspired them. Many will, doubtless, have noticed, as I have done, how the whole of Emerson illustrates every aspect of him.

Whether your discourse be of his religion, of his ethics, of his relation to society, or what not, the picture that you draw will have gained color and form from every page that he has written. He does not lie in strata; all that he is permeates all that he has done. His books cannot be indexed, unless you would refer every subject to

each paragraph. And so he cannot treat, no matter what subject, without incorporating in his statement the germs at least of all that he has thought and believed. In this respect he is like light — the presence of the general at the particular. And, to confess the truth, I find myself somewhat loath to diffract this pure ray to the arbitrary end of my special topic. Why should I speak of him as an American? That is not his definition. He was an American because he was himself. America, however, gives less limitation than any other nationality to a generous and serene personality.

I am sometimes disposed to think that Emerson's "English Traits" reveal his American traits more than anything else he has written. We are described by our own criticisms of others, and especially by our criticisms of another nation; the exceptions we take are the mould of our own figures. So we have valuable glimpses of Emerson's contours throughout this volume. And it is in all respects a fortunate work; as remarkable a one almost for him to write as a volume of his essays for any one else. Comparatively to his other books, it is as flesh and blood to spirit; Emersonian flesh and blood, it is true, and semi-trans-

lucent; but still it completes the man for us: he would have remained too problematical without it. Those who have never personally known him may finish and solidify their impressions of him here. He likes England and the English, too; and that sympathy is beyond our expectation of the mind that evolved "Nature" and "The Over-Soul." The grasp of his hand, I remember, was firm and stout, and we perceive those qualities in the descriptions and cordiality of "English Traits." Then, it is an objective book; the eye looks outward, not inward; these pages afford a basis not elsewhere obtainable of comparing his general human faculty with that of other men. Here he descends from the airy heights he treads so easily and, standing foot to foot with his peers, measures himself against them. He intends only to report their stature, and to leave himself out of the story; but their answers to his questions show what the questions were, and what the questioner. And we cannot help suspecting, though he did not, that the Englishmen were not a little put to it to keep pace with their clear-faced, penetrating, attentive visitor.

He has never said of his own countrymen the comfortable things that he tells of the English;

but we need not grumble at that. The father who is severe with his own children will freely admire those of others, for whom he is not responsible. Emerson is stern toward what we are, and arduous indeed in his estimate of what we ought to be. He intimates that we are not quite worthy of our continent; that we have not as yet lived up to our blue china. "In America the geography is sublime, but the men are not." And he adds that even our more presentable public acts are due to a money-making spirit: "The benefaction derived in Illinois and the great West from railroads is inestimable, and vastly exceeding any intentional philanthropy on record." He does not think very respectfully of the designs or the doings of the people who went to California in 1849, though he admits that "California gets civilized in this immoral way," and is fain to suppose that, "as there is use in the world for poisons, so the world cannot move without rogues," and that, in respect of America, "the huge animals nourish huge parasites, and the rancor of the disease attests the strength of the constitution." He ridicules our unsuspecting provincialism: "Have you seen the dozen great men of New York and Boston? Then you may as well die!"

He does not spare our tendency to spread-eaglesm and declamation, and having quoted a shrewd foreigner as saying of Americans that, "Whatever they say has a little the air of a speech," he proceeds to speculate whether "the American forest has refreshed some weeds of old Pictish barbarism just ready to die out?" He finds the foible especially of American youth to be — pretension; and remarks, suggestively, that we talk much about the key of the age, but "the key to all ages is imbecility!" He cannot reconcile himself to the mania for going abroad. "There is a restlessness in our people that argues want of character. . . . Can we never extract this tapeworm of Europe from the brain of our countrymen?" He finds, however, this involuntary compensation in the practice — that, practically "we go to Europe to be Americanized," and has faith that one day we shall cast out the passion for Europe by the passion for America." As to our political doings, he can never regard them with complacency. "Politics is an afterword," he declares — "a poor patching. We shall one day learn to supersede politics by education." He sympathizes with Lovelace's theory as to iron bars and stone walls, and holds

that freedom and slavery are inward, not outward conditions. Slavery is not in circumstance, but in feeling; you cannot eradicate the irons by external restrictions; and the truest way to emancipate the slave would be to educate him to a comprehension of his inviolable dignity and freedom as a human being. Amelioration of outward circumstances will be the effect, but can never be the means of mental and moral improvement. "Nothing is more disgusting," he affirms, generalizing the theme, "than the crowing about liberty by slaves, as most men are, and the flippant mistaking for freedom of some paper preamble like a 'Declaration of Independence' or the statute right to vote." But, "Our America has a bad name for superficialness. Great men, great nations, have not been boasters and buffoons, but perceivers of the terrors of life, and have nerved themselves to face it." He will not be deceived by the clamor of blatant reformers. "If an angry bigot assumes the bountiful cause of abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes, why should I not say to him: 'Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace, and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incred-

ible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off! ' ' "

He does not shrink from questioning the validity of some of our pet institutions, as, for instance, universal suffrage. He reminds us that in old Egypt the vote of a prophet was reckoned equal to one hundred hands, and records his opinion that it was much underestimated. "Shall we, then," he asks, "judge a country by the majority or by the minority? By the minority, surely! 'Tis pedantry to estimate nations by the census, or by square miles of land, or other than by their importance to the mind of the time." The majority are unripe, and do not yet know their own opinion. He would not, however, counsel an organic alteration in this respect, believing that, with the progress of enlightenment, such coarse constructions of human rights will adjust themselves. He concedès the sagacity of the Fultons and Watts of politics, who, noticing that the opinion of the million was the terror of the world, grouped it on a level, instead of piling it into a mountain, and so contrived to make of this terror the most harmless and energetic form of a State. But, again, he would not have us regard the State as a finality, or as relieving any man of

his individual responsibility for his actions and purposes. We are to confide in God—and not in our money, and in the State because it is guard of it. The Union itself has no basis but the good pleasure of the majority to be united. The wise and just men impart strength to the State, not receive it; and, if all went down, they and their like would soon combine in a new and better constitution. Yet he will not have us forget that only by the supernatural is a man strong; nothing so weak as an egotist. We are mighty only as vehicles of a truth before which State and individual are alike ephemeral. In this sense we, like other nations, shall have our kings and nobles—the leading and inspiration of the best; and he who would become a member of that nobility must obey his heart.

Government, he observes, has been a fossil—it should be a plant; statute law should express, not impede, the mind of mankind. In tracing the course of human political institutions, he finds feudalism succeeding monarchy, and this again followed by trade, the good and evil of which is that it would put everything in the market, talent, beauty, virtue, and man himself. By this means it has done its work; it has faults and will

end as the others. Its aristocracy need not be feared, for it can have no permanence, it is not entailed. In the time to come, he hopes to see us less anxious to be governed, in the technical sense; each man shall govern himself in the interests of all; government without any governor will be, for the first time, adamant. Is not every man sometimes a radical in politics? Men are conservatives when they are least vigorous, or when they are most luxurious; conservatism stands on man's limitations, reform on his infinitude. The age of the quadruped is to go out; the age of the brain and the heart is to come in. We are too pettifogging and imitative in our legislative conceptions; the Legislature of this country should become more catholic and cosmopolitan than any other. Let us be brave and strong enough to trust in humanity; strong natures are inevitable patriots. The time, the age, what is that, but a few prominent persons and a few active persons who epitomize the times? There is a bribe possible for any finite will; but the pure sympathy with universal ends is an infinite force, and cannot be bribed or bent. The world wants saviors and religions; society is servile from want of will; but there is a Destiny

by which the human race is guided, the race never dying, the individual never spared; its law is, you shall have everything as a member, nothing to yourself. Referring to the communities of various kinds, which were so much in vogue some years ago, he holds such to be valuable, not for what they have done, but for the indication they give of the revolution that is on the way. They place great faith in mutual support, but it is only as a man puts off from himself all external support and stands alone, that he is strong and will prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. A man ought to compare advantageously with a river, an oak, or a mountain. He must not shun whatever comes to him in the way of duty; the only path of escape is — performance. He must rely on Providence, but not in a timid or ecclesiastical spirit; it is no use to dress up that terrific benefactor in a clean shirt and white neckcloth of a student of divinity. We shall come out well, whatever personal or political disasters may intervene. For here in America is the home of man. After deducting our pitiful politics — shall John or Jonathan sit in the chair and hold the purse? — and making due allowance for our frivolities and insanities, there still remains

an organic simplicity and liberty, which, when it loses its balance, redresses itself presently, and which offers to the human mind opportunities not known elsewhere.

Whenever he touches upon the fundamental elements of social and rational life, it is always to enlarge and illuminate our conception of them. We are not wont to question the propriety of the sentiment of patriotism, for instance. We are to swear by our own *lares* and *penates*, and stand up for the American eagle, right or wrong. But Emerson instantly goes beneath this interpretation and exposes its crudity. The true sense of patriotism, according to him, is almost the reverse of its popular sense. He has no sympathy with that boyish egotism, hoarse with cheering for our side, for our State, for our town; the right patriotism consists in the delight which springs from contributing our peculiar and legitimate advantages to the benefit of humanity. Every foot of soil has its proper quality; the grape on two sides of the fence has new flavors; and so every acre on the globe, every family of men, every point of climate, has its distinguishing virtues. This being admitted, however, Emerson will yield in patriotism to no one; his only concern is that the

advantages we contribute shall be the most instead of the least possible. "This country," he says, "does not lie here in the sun causeless, and though it may not be easy to define its influence, men feel already its emancipating quality in the careless self-reliance of the manners, in the freedom of thought, in the direct roads by which grievances are reached and redressed, and even in the reckless and sinister politics, not less than in purer expressions. Bad as it is, this freedom leads onward and upward to a Columbia of thought and art, which is the last and endless end of Columbus's adventure." Nor is this poet of virtue and philosophy ever more truly patriotic, from his spiritual standpoint, than when he throws scorn and indignation upon his country's sins and frailties. "But who is he that prates of the culture of mankind, of better arts and life? Go, blind worm, go — behold the famous States harrying Mexico with rifle and with knife! Or who, with accent bolder, dare praise the freedom-loving mountaineer? I found by thee, O rushing Contoocook! and in thy valleys, Agiochook! the jackals of the negro-holder. . . . What boots thy zeal, O glowing friend, that would indignant rend the northland from the South? Wherefore? To

what good end? Boston Bay and Bunker Hill would serve things still — things are of the snake. The horseman serves the horse, the neat-herd serves the neat, the merchant serves the purse, the eater serves his meat; 'tis the day of the chattel, web to weave, and corn to grind; things are in the saddle, and ride mankind!"

But I must not begin to quote Emerson's poetry; only it is worth noting that he, whose verse is uniformly so abstractly and intellectually beautiful, kindles to passion whenever his theme is of America. The loftiest patriotism never found more ardent and eloquent expression than in the hymn sung at the completion of the Concord monument, on the 19th of April, 1836. There is no rancor in it; no taunt of triumph; "the foe long since in silence slept"; but throughout there resounds a note of pure and deep rejoicing at the victory of justice over oppression, which Concord fight so aptly symbolized. In "Hamatreya" and "The Earth Song," another chord is struck, of calm, laconic irony. Shall we too, he asks, we Yankee farmers, descendants of the men who gave up all for freedom, go back to the creed outworn of mediæval feudalism and aristocracy, and say, of the land that yields us

its produce, "'Tis mine, my children's, and my name's"? Earth laughs in flowers at our boyish boastfulness, and asks "How am I theirs if they cannot hold me, but I hold them?" "When I heard 'The Earth Song,' I was no longer brave; my avarice cooled, like lust in the child of the grave." Or read "Monadnoc," and mark the insight and the power with which the significance and worth of the great facts of nature are interpreted and stated. "Complement of human kind, having us at vantage still, our sumptuous indigence, oh, barren mound, thy plenties fill! We fool and prate; thou art silent and sedate. To myriad kinds and times one sense the constant mountain doth dispense; shedding on all its snows and leaves, one joy it joys, one grief it grieves. Thou seest, oh, watchman tall, our towns and races grow and fall, and imagest the stable good for which we all our lifetime grope; and though the substance us elude, we in thee the shadow find." . . . "Thou dost supply the shortness of our days, and promise, on thy Founder's truth, long morrow to this mortal youth!" I have ignored the versified form in these extracts, in order to bring them into more direct contrast with the writer's prose, and show that the poetry is inher-

ent. No other poet, with whom I am acquainted, has caused the very spirit of a land, the mother of men, to express itself so adequately as Emerson has done in these pieces. Whitman falls short of them, it seems to me, though his effort is greater.

Emerson is continually urging us to give heed to this grand voice of hills and streams, and to mould ourselves upon its suggestions. The difficulty and the anomaly are that we are not native; that England is our mother, quite as much as Monadnoc; that we are heirs of memories and traditions reaching far beyond the times and the confines of the Republic. We cannot assume the splendid childlikeness of the great primitive races, and exhibit the hairy strength and unconscious genius that the poet longs to find in us. He remarks somewhere that the culminating period of good in nature and the world is in just that moment of transition, when the swarthy juices still flow plentifully from nature, but their astringency or acidity is got out by ethics and humanity.

It was at such a period that Greece attained her apogee; but our experience, it seems to me, must needs be different. Our story is not of birth, but of regeneration, a far more subtle and less obvious transaction. The Homeric California of which

Bret Harte is the reporter does not seem to me in the closest sense American. It is a comparatively superficial matter — this savage freedom and raw poetry; it belongs to all pioneering life, where every man must stand for himself, and Judge Lynch strings up the defaulter to the nearest tree. But we are only incidentally pioneers in this sense; and the characteristics thus impressed upon us will leave no traces in the completed American. "A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont," says Emerson, "who in turn tries all the professions — who teams it, farms it, peddles, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always, like a cat, falls on his feet — is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days, and feels no shame in not studying a 'profession,' for he does not postpone his life, but lives already." That is stirringly said: but, as a matter of fact, most of the Americans whom we recognize as great did not have such a history; nor, if they had it, would they be on that account more American. On the other hand, the careers of men like Jim Fiske and Commodore Vanderbilt might serve very well as illustrations of the above sketch. If we must wait for

our character until our geographical advantages and the absence of social distinctions manufacture it for us, we are likely to remain a long while in suspense. When our foreign visitors begin to evince a more poignant interest in Concord and Fifth Avenue than in the Mississippi and the Yellowstone, it may be an indication to us that we are assuming our proper position relative to our physical environment. "The *land*," says Emerson, "is a sanative and Americanizing influence which promises to disclose new virtues for ages to come." Well, when we are virtuous, we may, perhaps, spare our own blushes by allowing our topography, symbolically, to celebrate us, and when our admirers would worship the purity of our intentions, refer them to Walden Pond; or to Mount Shasta, when they would expatiate upon our lofty generosity. It is, perhaps, true, meanwhile, that the chances of a man's leading a decent life are greater in a palace than in a pigsty.

But this is holding our author too strictly to the letter of his message. And, at any rate, the Americanism of Emerson is better than anything that he has said in vindication of it. He is the champion of this commonwealth; he is our future, living in our present, and showing the world, by

anticipation, as it were, what sort of excellence we are capable of attaining. A nation that has produced Emerson, and can recognize in him bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh—and, still more, spirit of her spirit—that nation may look toward the coming age with security. But he has done more than thus to prophesy of his country; he is electric and stimulates us to fulfil our destiny. To use a phrase of his own, we “cannot hear of personal vigor of any kind, great power of performance, without fresh resolution.” Emerson helps us most in provoking us to help ourselves. The pleasantest revenge is that which we can sometimes take upon our great men in quoting of themselves what they have said of others.

It is easy to be so revenged upon Emerson, because he, more than most persons of such eminence, has been generous and cordial in his appreciation of all human worth. “If there should appear in the company,” he observes, “some gentle soul who knows little of persons and parties, of Carolina or Cuba, but who announces a law that disposes these particulars, and so certifies me of the equity which checkmates every false player, bankrupts every self-seeker, and apprises me of my independence on any conditions of country, or time, or human

body, that man liberates me. . . . I am made immortal by apprehending my possession of incorruptible goods." Who can state the mission and effect of Emerson more tersely and aptly than those words do it?

But, once more, he does not desire eulogiums, and it seems half ungenerous to force them upon him now that he can no longer defend himself. I prefer to conclude by repeating a passage characteristic of him both as a man and as an American, and which, perhaps, conveys a sounder and healthier criticism, both for us and for him, than any mere abject and nerveless admiration; for great men are great only in so far as they liberate us, and we undo their work in courting their tyranny. The passage runs thus: —

"Let me remind the reader that I am only an experimenter. Do not set the least value on what I do, or the least discredit on what I do not, as if I pretended to settle anything as true or false. I unsettle all things. No facts to me are sacred; none are profane. I simply experiment—an endless seeker, with no Past at my back!"

CHAPTER X.

MODERN MAGIC.

HUMAN nature enjoys nothing better than to wonder — to be mystified ; and it thanks and remembers those who have the skill to gratify this craving. The magicians of old knew that truth and conducted themselves accordingly. But our modern wonder-workers fail of their due influence, because, not content to perform their marvels, they go on to explain them. Merlin and Roger Bacon were greater public benefactors than Morse and Edison. Man is — and he always has been and will be — something else besides a pure intelligence : and science, in order to become really popular, must contrive to touch man somewhere else besides on the purely intellectual side : it must remember that man is all heart, all hope, all fear, and all foolishness, quite as much as he is all brains. Otherwise, science can never expect to take the place of superstition, much less of religion, in mankind's affection. In order to be a

really successful man of science, it is first of all indispensable to make one's self master of everything in nature and in human nature that science is not.

What must one do, in short, in order to become a magician? I use the term, here, in its weightiest sense. How to make myself visible and invisible at will? How to present myself in two or more places at once? How answer your question before you ask it, and describe to you your most secret thoughts and actions? How shall I call spirits from the vasty deep, and make you see and hear and feel them? How paralyze your strength with a look, heal your wound with a touch, or cause your bullet to rebound harmless from my unprotected flesh? How shall I walk on the air, sink through the earth, pass through stone walls, or walk, dry-shod, on the floor of the ocean? How shall I visit the other side of the moon, jump through the ring of Saturn, and gather sunflowers in Sirius? There are persons now living who profess to do no less remarkable feats, and to regard them as incidental merely to achievements far more important. A school of hierophants or adepts is said to exist in Tibet, who, as a matter of daily routine, quite transcend everything that

we have been accustomed to consider natural possibility. What is the course of study, what are the ways and means whereby such persons accomplish such results?

The conventional attitude towards such matters is, of course, that of unconditional scepticism. But it is pleasant, occasionally, to take an airing beyond the bounds of incredulity. For my own part, it is true, I must confess my inability to believe in anything positively supernatural. The supernatural and the illusory are to my mind convertible terms: they cannot really exist or take place. Let us be sure, however, that we are agreed as to what supernatural means. If a magician, before my eyes, transformed an old man into a little girl, I should call that supernatural; and nothing should convince me that my senses had not been grossly deceived. But were the magician to leave the room by passing through the solid wall, or "go out" like an exploding soap-bubble,—I might think what I please, but I should not venture to dogmatically pronounce the thing supernatural; because the phenomenon known as "matter" is scientifically unknown, and therefore no one can tell what modifications it may not be susceptible of:—no one, that is to

say, except the person who, like the magician of our illustration, professes to possess, and (for aught I can affirm to the contrary) may actually possess a knowledge unshared by the bulk of mankind. The transformation of an old man into a little girl, on the other hand, would be a transaction involving the immaterial soul as well as the material body; and if I do not know that that cannot take place, I am forever incapable of knowing anything. These are extreme examples, but they serve to emphasize an important distinction.

The whole domain of magic, in short, occupies that anomalous neutral ground that intervenes between the facts of our senses and the truths of our intuitions. Fact and truth are not convertible terms; they abide in two distinct planes, like thought and speech, or soul and body; one may imply or involve the other, but can never demonstrate it. Experience and intuition together comprehend the entire realm of actual and conceivable knowledge. Whatever contradicts both experience and intuition may, therefore, be pronounced illusion. But this neutral ground is the home of phenomena which intuition does not deny, and which experience has not confirmed. It is still a wide zone, though not so wide as it

was a hundred years ago, or fifty, or even ten. It narrows every day, as science, or the classification of experience, expands. Are we, then, to look for a time when the zone shall have dwindled to a mathematical line, and magic confess itself to have been nothing but the science of an advanced school of investigators? Will the human intellect acquire a power before which all mysteries shall become transparent? Let us dwell upon this question a little longer.

A mystery that is a mystery can never, humanly speaking, become anything else. Instances of such mysteries can readily be adduced. The universe itself is built upon them and is the greatest of them. They lie before the threshold and at the basis of all existence. For example:—here is a lump of compact, whitish, cheese-like substance, about as much as would go into a thimble. From this I profess to be able to produce a gigantic, intricate structure, sixty feet in height and diameter, hard, solid, and enduring, which shall furthermore possess the power of extending and multiplying itself until it covers the whole earth, and even all the earths in the universe, if it could reach them. Is such a profession as this credible? It is entirely credible, as soon as I

paraphrase it by saying that I propose to plant an acorn. And yet all magic has no mystery which is so wonderful as this universal mystery of growth: and the only reason we are not lost in amazement at it is that it goes quietly on all the time, and perfects itself under uniform conditions. But let me eliminate from the phenomenon the one element of time — which is logically the least essential factor in the product, unreal and arbitrary, based on the revolution of the earth, and conceivably variable to any extent — grant me this, and the world would come to see me do the miracle. But, with time or without it, the mystery is just as mysterious.

Natural mysteries, then, — the mysteries of life, death, creation, growth, — do not fall under our present consideration: they are beyond the legitimate domain of magic: and no intellectual development to which we may hereafter attain will bring us a step nearer their solution. But with the problems proper to magic, the case is different. Magic is distinctively not Divine, but human: a finite conundrum, not an Infinite enigma. If there has ever been a magician since the world began, then all mankind may become magicians, if they will give the necessary time and trouble.

And yet, magic is not simply an advanced region of the path which science is pursuing. Science is concerned with results, — with material phenomena; whereas magic is, primarily, the study of causes, or of spiritual phenomena; or, to use another definition, — of phenomena which the senses perceive, not in themselves, but only in their results. So long as we restrict ourselves to results, our activity is confined to analysis; but when we begin to investigate causes, we are on the road not only to comprehend results, but (within limits) to modify or produce them.

Science, however, blocks our advance in this direction by denying, or at least refusing to admit, the existence of the spiritual world, or world of causes: because, being spiritual, it is not sensible, or cognizable in sense. Science admits only material causes, or the changes wrought in matter by itself. If we ask what is the cause of a material cause, we are answered that it is a supposed entity called Force, concerning which there is nothing further to be known.

At this point, then, argument (on the material plane) comes to an end, and speculation or assumption begins. Science answers its own questions, but neither can nor will answer any others.

And upon what pretence do we ask any others? We ask them upon two grounds. The first is that some people, — we might even say, most people, — would be glad to believe in supersensuous existence, and are always on the alert to examine any plausible hypothesis pointing in that direction: and secondly, there exists a vast amount of testimony (we need not call it evidence) tending to show that the supersensuous world has been discovered, and that it endows its discoverers with sundry notable advantages. Of course, we are not obliged to credit this testimony, unless we want to: and — for some reason, never fully explained — a great many people who accept natural mysteries quite amiably become indignant when requested to examine mysteries of a much milder order. But it is not my intention to discuss the limits of the probable; but to swallow as much as possible first, and endeavor to account for it afterwards.

There is, as every reader knows, a class of phenomena — such as hypnotism, trance, animal magnetism, and so forth — the occurrence of which science has conceded, though failing as yet to offer any intelligent explanation of them. It is suggested that they are peculiar states of the

brain and nerve-centres, physical in their nature and origin, though evading our present physical tests. Be that as it may, they afford a capital introduction to the study of magic; if, indeed, they, and a few allied phenomena, do not comprise the germs of the whole matter. Apropos of this subject, a society has lately been organized in London, with branches on the Continent and in this country, composed of scientific men, Fellows of the Royal Society, members of Parliament, professors, and literary men, calling themselves the "Psychical Research Society," and making it their business to test and investigate these very marvels, under the most stringent scientific conditions. But the capacity to be deceived of the bodily senses is almost unlimited; in fact, we know that they are incapable of telling us the ultimate truth on any subject; and we are able to get along with them only because we have found their misinformation to be sufficiently uniform for most practical purposes. But once admit that the origin of these phenomena is not on the physical plane, and then, if we are to give any weight at all to them, it can be only from a spiritual standpoint. In other words, unless we can approach such questions by an *a priori* route, we

might as well let them alone. We can reason from spirit to body — from mind to matter — but we can never reverse that process, and from matter evolve mind. The reason is that matter is not found to contain mind, but is only acted upon by it, as inferior by superior; and we cannot get out of the bag more than has been put into it. The acorn (to use our former figure) can never explain the oak; but the oak readily accounts for the acorn. It may be doubted, therefore, whether the Psychical Research Society can succeed in doing more than to give a respectable endorsement to a perplexing possibility, — so long as they adhere to the inductive method. Should they, however, abandon the inductive method for the deductive, they will forfeit the allegiance of all consistently scientific minds; and they may, perhaps, make some curious contributions to philosophy. At present, they appear to be astride the fence between philosophy and science, as if they hoped in some way to make the former satisfy the latter's demands. But the difference between the evidence that demonstrates a fact and the evidence that confirms a truth is, once more, a difference less of degree than of kind. We can never obtain sensible verification of a proposition

that transcends sense. We must accept it without material proof, or not at all. We may believe, for instance, that Creation is the work of an intelligent Divine Being; or we may disbelieve it; but we can never prove it. If we do believe it, innumerable confirmations of it meet us at every turn: but no such confirmations, and no multiplication of them, can persuade a disbeliever. For belief is ever incommunicable from without; it can be generated only from within. The term "belief" cannot be applied to our recognition of a physical fact: we do not believe in that—we are only sensible of it.

In this connection, a few words will be in order concerning what is called Spiritism,—a subject which has of late years been exciting a good deal of remark. Its disciples claim for it the dignity of a new and positive revelation,—a revelation to sense of spiritual being. Now, the entire universe may be described as a revelation to sense of spiritual being—for those who happen to believe *a priori*, or from spontaneous inward conviction, in spiritual being. We may believe a man's body, for example, to be the effect of which his soul is the cause; but no one can reach that conviction by the most refined dissection of the bodily tis-

sues. How, then, does the spiritists' Positive Revelation help the matter? Their answer is that the physical universe is a permanent and orderly phenomenon which (setting aside the problem of its First Cause) fully accounts for itself; whereas the phenomena of Spiritism, such as rapping, table-tipping, materializing, and so forth, are, if not supernatural, at any rate extra-natural. They occur in consequence of a conscious effort to bring them about; they cease when that effort is discontinued; they abound in indications of being produced by independent intelligencies; they are inexplicable upon any recognized theory of physics; and, therefore, there is nothing for it but to regard them as spiritual. And what then? Then, of course, there must be spirits, and a life after the death of the body; and the great question of Immortality is answered in the affirmative!

Let us, for the sake of argument, concede that the manifestations upon which the Spiritists found their claims are genuine: that they are or can be produced without fraud; and let us then enquire in what respect our means for the conversion of the sceptic are improved. In the first place we find that all the manifestations—be their

cause what it may — can occur only on the physical plane. However much the origin of the phenomena may perplex us, the phenomena themselves must be purely material, in so far as they are perceptible at all. “Raps” are audible according to the same laws of vibration as other sounds: the tilting table is simply a material body displaced by an adequate agency; the materialized hand or face is nothing but physical substance assuming form. Plainly, therefore, we have as much right to ascribe a spiritual source to such phenomena as we have to ascribe a spiritual source to the ordinary phenomena of nature, such as a tree or a man’s body,—just as much right — and no more! Consequently, we are no nearer converting our sceptic than we were at the outset. He admits the physical manifestation: there is no intrinsic novelty about that: but when we proceed to argue that the manifestations are wrought by spirits, he points out to us that this is sheer assumption on our part. “I have not seen a spirit,” he says: “I have not heard one; I have not felt one; nor is it possible that my bodily senses should perceive anything that is not at least as physical as they are. I have witnessed certain transactions effected by means unknown

to me—possibly by the action of a natural law not yet fully expounded by science. If there was anything spiritual in the affair, it has not been manifest to my apprehension: and I must decline to lend my countenance to any such pretensions.”

That would be the reply of the sceptic who was equal to the emergency. But let us suppose that he is not equal to it: that he is a weak-kneed, impressionable person, with a tendency to jump at conclusions; and that he is scared or mystified into believing that “spirits” may be at the bottom of it. What, then, will be the character of the faith which the Positive Revelation has furnished him? He has discovered that existence continues, in some fashion, after the death of the body. He has learned that there may be such a thing as—not immortality exactly, but—post-mortem consciousness. He has been saddled with the conviction that the other world is full of restless ghosts, who come shuddering back from their cold emptiness, and try to warm themselves in the borrowed flesh and blood, and with the purblind selfishness and curiosity of us who still remain here. “Have faith: be not impatient: the conditions are unfavorable: but we are working for you!”—such is the constant burden of the com-

munications. But, if there be a God, why must our relations with him be complicated by the interference of such forlorn prevaricators and amateur Paracletes as these? we do not wish to be "worked for," — to be carried heavenward on some one else's shoulders: but to climb thither by God's help and our own will, or to stay were we are. Moreover, by what touchstone shall we test the veracity of the self-appointed purveyors of this Positive Revelation? Are we to believe what they say, because they have lost their bodies? If life teaches us anything, it is that God does above all things respect the spiritual freedom of his creatures. He does not terrify and bully us into acknowledging Him by ghostly juggleries in darkened rooms, and by vapid exhibitions addressed to our outward senses. He approaches each man in the innermost sacred audience-chamber of his heart, and there shows him good and evil, truth and falsehood, and bids him choose. And that choice, if made aright, becomes a genuine and undying belief, because it was made in freedom, unbiassed by external threats and cajoleries. Such belief is, itself, immortality,—something as distinct from post-mortem consciousness as wisdom is distinct from mere animal intelli-

gence. On the whole, therefore, there seems to belittle real worth in Spiritism, even accepting it at its own valuation. The nourishment it yields the soul is too meagre; and — save on that one bare point of life beyond the grave, which might just as easily prove an infinite curse as an infinite blessing — it affords no trustworthy news whatever.

But these objections do not apply to magic proper. Magic seems to consist mainly in the control which mind may exceptionally exercise over matter. In hypnotism, the subject abjectly believes and obeys the operator. If he be told that he cannot step across a chalk mark on the floor, he cannot step across it. He dissolves in tears or explodes with laughter, according as the operator tells him he has cause for merriment or tears: and if he be assured that the water he drinks is Madeira wine or Java coffee, he has no misgiving that such is not the case.

To say that this state of things is brought about by the exercise of the operator's will, is not to explain the phenomenon, but to put it in different terms. What is the will, and how does it produce such a result? Here is a man who believes, at the word of command, that the thing which all the rest of the world calls a chair is a

horse. How is such misapprehension on his part possible? our senses are our sole means of knowing external objects: and this man's senses seem to confirm—at least they by no means correct—his persuasion that a given object is something very different. Could we solve this puzzle, we should have done something towards gaining an insight into the philosophy of magic.

We observe, in the first place, that the *rationale* of hypnotism, and of trance in general, is distinct from that of memory and of imagination, and even from that of dreams. It resembles these only in so far as it involves a quasi-perception of something not actually present or existent. But memory and imagination never mislead us into mistaking their suggestions for realities: while in dreams, the dreamer's fancy alone is active; the bodily faculties are not in action. In trance, however, the subject may appear to be, to all intents and purposes, awake. Yet this state, unlike the others, is abnormal. The brain seems to be in a passive, or, at any rate, in a detached condition; it cannot carry out or originate ideas, nor can it examine an idea as to its truth or falsehood. Furthermore, it cannot receive or interpret the reports of its own bodily senses. In short, its

relations with the external world are suspended: and since the body is a part of the external world, the brain can no longer control the body's movements.

Bodily movements are, however, to some extent, automatic. Given a certain stimulus in the brain or nerve-centres, and certain corresponding muscular contractions follow: and this whether or not the stimulus be applied in a normal manner. Although, therefore, the entranced brain cannot spontaneously control the body, yet if we can apply an independent stimulus to it, the body will make a fitting and apparently intelligent response. The reader has doubtless seen those ingenious pieces of mechanism which are set in motion by dropping into an orifice a coin or pellet. Now, could we drop into the passive brain of an entranced person the idea that a chair is a horse, for instance,—the person would give every sensible indication of having adopted that figment as a fact.

But how (since he can no longer communicate with the world by means of his senses) is this idea to be insinuated? The man is magnetized—that is to say, insulated; how can we have intercourse with him?

Experiments show that this can be effected only through the magnetizer. Asleep towards the rest of the world, towards him the entranced person is awake. Not awake, however, as to the bodily senses; neither the magnetizer nor any one else can approach by that route. It is true that, if the magnetizer speaks to him, he knows what is said: but he does not hear physically; because he perceives the unspoken thought just as readily. But since whatever does not belong to his body must belong to his soul (or mind, if that term be preferable), it follows that the magnetizer must communicate with the magnetized on the mental or spiritual plane; that is, immediately, or without the intervention of the body.

Let us review the position we have reached:— We have an entranced or magnetized person,— a person whose mind, or spirit, has, by a certain process, been so far withdrawn from conscious communion with his own bodily senses as to disable him from receiving through them any tidings from the external world. He is not, however, wholly withdrawn from his body, for, in that case, the body would be dead; whereas, in fact, its organic or animal life continues almost unimpaired. He is therefore neither out of the body

nor in it, but in an anomalous region midway between the two,— a state in which he can receive no sensuous impressions from the physical world, nor be put in conscious communication with the spiritual world through any channel — save one.

This one exception is, as we have seen, the person who magnetized him. The magnetizer is, then, the one and only medium through which the person magnetized can obtain impressions: and these impressions are conveyed directly from the mind, or spirit, of the magnetizer to that of the magnetized. Let us note, further, that the former is not, like the latter, in a semi-disembodied state, but is in the normal exercise of his bodily functions and faculties. He possesses, consequently, his normal ability to originate ideas and to impart them: and whatever ideas he chooses to impart to the magnetized person, the latter is fain passively and implicitly to accept. And having so received them, they descend naturally into the automatic mechanism of the body, and are by it mechanically interpreted or enacted.

So far, the theory is good: but something seems amiss in the working. We find that a certain process frequently issues in a certain effect: but we do not yet know why this should be the case.

Some fundamental link is wanting; and this link is manifestly a knowledge of the true relations between mind and matter: of the laws to which the mental or spiritual world is subject: of what nature itself is: and of what Creation means. Let us cast a glance at these fundamental subjects; for they are the key without which the secrets of magic must remain locked and hidden.

In common speech we call the realm of the material universe, Creation; but philosophy denies its claim to that title. Man alone is Creation: everything else is appearance. The universe appears, because man exists: he implies the universe, but is not implied by it. We may assist our metaphysics, here, by a physical illustration. Take a glass prism and hold in the sunlight before a white surface. Let the prism represent man: the sun, man's Creator: and the seven-hued ray cast by the prism, nature, or the material universe. Now, if we remove the light, the ray vanishes: it vanishes, also, if we take away the prism: but so long as the sun and the prism — God and man — remain in their mutual relation, so long must the rainbow nature appear. Nature, in short, is not God; neither is it man; but it is the inevitable concomitant or expression of the

creative attitude of God towards man. It is the shadow of the elements of which humanity or human nature is composed: or, shall we say, it is the apparition in sense of the spiritual being of mankind,—not, be it observed, of the being of any individual or of any aggregation of individuals; but of humanity as a whole. For this reason, also, is nature orderly, complete, and permanent,—that it is conditioned not upon our frail and faulty personalities, but upon our impersonal, universal human nature, in which is transacted the miracle of God's incarnation, and through which He forever shines.

Besides Creator and creature, nothing else can be; and whatever else seems to be, must be only a seeming. Nature, therefore, is the shadow of a shade, but it serves an indispensable use. For since there can be no direct communication between finite and Infinite—God and man—a medium or common ground is needed, where they may meet; and nature, the shadow which the Infinite causes the finite to project, is just that medium. Man, looking upon this shadow, mistakes it for real substance, serving him for foothold and background, and assisting him to attain self-consciousness. God, on the other hand, finds

in nature the means of revealing Himself to His creature without compromising the creature's freedom. Man supposes the universe to be a physical structure made by God in space and time, and in some region of which He resides, at a safe distance from us His creatures: whereas, in truth, God is distant from us only so far as we remove ourselves from our own inmost intuitions of truth and good.

But what is that substance or quality which underlies and gives homogeneity to the varying forms of nature, so that they seem to us to own a common origin?—what is that logical abstraction upon which we have bestowed the name of matter? scientific analysis finds matter only as forms, never as itself: until, in despair, it invents an atomic theory, and lets it go at that. But if, discarding the scientific method, we question matter from the philosophical standpoint, we shall find it less obdurate.

Man, considered as a mind or spirit, consists of volition and intelligence; or, what is the same, of emotion or affection, and of the thoughts which are created by this affection. Nothing can be affirmed of man as a spirit which does not fall under one or other of these two parts. Now, a crea-

ture consisting solely of affections and thoughts must, of course, have something to love and to think about. Man's final destiny is no doubt to love and consider his Creator; but that can only be after a reactionary or regenerative process has begun in him. Meanwhile, he must love and consider the only other available object—that is, himself. Manifestly, however, in order to bestow this attention upon himself, he must first be made aware of his own existence. In order to effect this, something must be added to man as spirit, enabling him to discriminate between the subject thinking and loving, and the object loved and thought of. This additional something, again, in order to fulfil its purpose, must be so devised as not to appear an addition: it must seem even more truly the man than the man himself. It must, therefore, perfectly represent or correspond to the spiritual form and constitution; so that the thoughts and affections of the spirit may enter into it as into their natural home and continent.

This continent or vehicle of the mind is the human body. The body has two aspects,—substance and form, answering to the two aspects of the mind,—affection and thought: and affection finds its incarnation or correspondence in sub-

stance ; and thought, in form. The mind, in short, realizes itself in terms of its reflection in the body, much as the body realizes itself in terms of its reflection in the looking-glass : but it does more than this, for it identifies itself with this its image. And how is this identification made possible ?

It is brought about by the deception of sense, which is the medium of communication between the spiritual and the material man. Until this miraculous medium is put in action, there can be no conscious relation between these two planes, admirably as they are adapted to each other. Sense is spiritual on one side and material on the other : but it is only on the material side that it gathers its reports : on the spiritual side it only delivers them. Every one of the five messengers whereby we are apprised of external existence brings us an earthly message only. And since these messengers act spontaneously, and since the mind's only other source of knowledge is intuition, which cannot be sensuously confirmed,—it is little wonder if man has inclined to the persuasion that what is highest in him is but an attribute of what is lowest, and that when the body dies, the soul must follow it into nothingness.

Creative energy, being infinite, passes through the world of causes to the world of effects — through the spiritual to the physical plane. Matter is therefore the symbol of the ultimate of creative activity ; it is the negative of God. As God is infinite, matter is finite ; as He is life, it is death ; as He is real, it is unreal ; as He reveals, matter veils. And as the relation of God to man's spirit is constant and eternal, so is the physical quality of matter fixed and permanent.

Now, in order to arrive at a comprehension of what matter is in itself, let us descend from the general to the specific, and investigate the philosophical elements of a pebble, for instance. A pebble is two things : it is a mineral : and it is a particular concrete example of mineral. In its mineral aspect, it is out of space and time, and is — not a fact, but — a truth ; a perception of the mind. In so far as it is mineral, therefore, it has no relation to sense, but only to thought : and on the other hand, in so far as it is a particular concrete pebble, it is cognizable by sense but not by thought ; for what is in sense is out of thought : the one supersedes the other. But if sense thus absorbs matter, so as to be philosophically indis-

tinguishable from it, we are constrained to identify matter with our sensuous perception of it: and if our exemplary pebble had nothing but its material quality to depend upon, it would cease to exist not only to thought, but to sense likewise. Its metaphysical aspect, in short, is the only reality appertaining to it. Matter, then, may be defined as the impact upon sense of that prismatic ray which we have called nature.

To apply this discussion to the subject in hand: Magic is a sort of parody of reality. And when we recognize that Creation proceeds from within outwards, or endogenously; and that matter is not the objective but the subjective side of the universe, we are in a position to perceive that in order magically to control matter, we must apply our efforts not to matter itself, but to our own minds. The natural world affects us from without inwards: the magical world affects us from within outwards: instead of objects suggesting ideas, ideas are made to suggest objects. And as, in the former case, when the object is removed the idea vanishes; so in the latter case, when the idea is removed, the object vanishes. Both objects are illusions; but the illusion in the first instance is the normal illusion of sense, whereas

in the second instance it is the abnormal illusion of mind.

The above argument can at best serve only as a hint to such as incline seriously to investigate the subject, and perhaps as a touchstone for testing the validity of a large and noisy mass of pretensions which engage the student at the outset of his enquiry. Many of these pretensions are the result of ignorance; many of deliberate intent to deceive; some, again, of erroneous philosophical theories. The Tibetan adepts seem to belong either to the second or to the last of these categories,—or, perhaps, to an impartial mingling of all three. They import a cumbrous machinery of auras, astral bodies, and elemental spirits; they divide man into seven principles, nature into seven kingdoms; they regard spirit as a refined form of matter, and matter as the one absolute fact of the universe,—the alpha and omega of all things. They deny a supreme Deity, but hold out hopes of a practical deityship for the majority of the human race. In short, their philosophy appeals to the most evil instincts of the soul, and has the air of being *ex-post-facto*; whenever they run foul of a prodigy, they invent arbitrarily a fanciful explanation of it. But it will be found,

I think, that the various phases of hypnotism, and a systematized use of spiritism, will amply account for every miracle they actually bring to pass.

Upon the whole, a certain vulgarity is inseparable from even the most respectable forms of magic,—an atmosphere of tinsel, of ostentation, of big cry and little wool. A child might have told us that matter is not almighty, that minds are sometimes transparent to one another, that love and faith can work wonders. And we also know that, in this mortal life, our means are exquisitely adapted to our ends; and that we can gain no solid comfort or advantage by striving to elbow our way a few inches further into the region of the occult and abnormal. Magic, however specious its achievements, is only a mockery of the Creative power, and exposes its unlikeness to it. “It is the attribute of natural existence,” a profound writer has said, “to be a form of use to something higher than itself, so that whatever does not, either potentially or actually, possess within it this soul of use, does not honestly belong to nature, but is a sensational effect produced upon the individual intelligence.” *

* Henry James, in “Society the Redeemed Form of Man.”

No one can overstep the order and modesty of general existence without bringing himself into perilous proximity to subjects more profound and sacred than the occasion warrants. Life need not be barren of mystery and miracle to any one of us; but they shall be such tender mysteries and instructive miracles as the devotion of motherhood, and the blooming of spring. We are too close to Infinite love and wisdom to play pranks before it, and provoke comparison between our paltry juggleries and its omnipotence and majesty.

CHAPTER XI.

AMERICAN WILD ANIMALS IN ART.

THE hunter and the sportsman are two very different persons. The hunter pursues animals because he loves them and sympathizes with them, and kills them as the champions of chivalry used to slay one another — courteously, fairly, and with admiration and respect. To stalk and shoot the elk and the grizzly bear is to him what wooing and winning a beloved maiden would be to another man. Far from being the foe or exterminator of the game he follows, he, more than any one else, is their friend, vindicator, and confidant. A strange mutual ardor and understanding unites him with his quarry. He loves the mountain sheep and the antelope, because they can escape him; the panther and the bear, because they can destroy him. His relations with them are clean, generous, and manly. And on the other hand, the wild animals whose wildness can never be tamed, whose inmost principle

of existence it is to be apart and unapproachable, — those creatures who may be said to cease to be when they cease to be intractable, — seem, after they have eluded their pursuer to the utmost, or fought him to the death, to yield themselves to him with a sort of wild contentment — as if they were glad to admit the sovereignty of man, though death come with the admission. The hunter, in short, asks for his happiness only to be alone with what he hunts; the sportsman, after his day's sport, must needs hasten home to publish the size of the "bag," and to wring from his fellow-men the glory and applause which he has not the strength and simplicity to find in the game itself.

But if the true hunter is rare, the union of the hunter and the artist is rarer still. It demands not only the close familiarity, the loving observation, and the sympathy, but also the faculty of creation — the eye which selects what is constructive and beautiful, and passes over what is superfluous and inharmonious, and the hand skilful to carry out what the imagination conceives. In the man whose work I am about to consider, these qualities are developed in a remarkable degree, though it was not until he was a man grown, and had fought with distinction through the civil war, that he

himself became aware of the artistic power that was in him. The events of his life, could they be rehearsed here, would form a tale of adventure and vicissitude more varied and stirring than is often found in fiction. He has spent by himself days and weeks in the vast solitudes of our western prairies and southern morasses. He has been the companion of trappers and frontiersmen, the friend and comrade of Indians, sleeping side by side with them in their wigwams, running the rapids in their canoes, and riding with them in the hunt. He has met and overcome the panther and the grizzly single-handed, and has pursued the flying cimmaron to the snowy summits of the Rocky Mountains, and brought back its crescent horns as a trophy. He has fought and slain the gray wolf with no other weapons than his hands and teeth; and at night he has lain concealed by lonely tarns, where the wild coyote came to patter and bark and howl at the midnight moon. His name and achievements are familiar to the dwellers in those savage regions, whose estimate of a man is based, not upon his social and financial advantages, but upon what he is and can do. Yet he is not one who wears his merit outwardly. His appearance, indeed, is striking;

tall and athletic, broad-shouldered and stout-limbed, with the long, elastic step of the moccasined Indian, and something of the Indian's reticence and simplicity. But he can with difficulty be brought to allude to his adventures, and is reserved almost to the point of ingenuity on all that concerns himself or redounds to his credit. It is only in familiar converse with friends that the humor, the cultivation, the knowledge, and the social charm of the man appear, and his marvellous gift of vivid and picturesque narration discloses itself. But, in addition to all this, or above it all, he is the only great animal sculptor of his time, the successor of the French Barye, and (as any one may satisfy himself who will take the trouble to compare their works) the equal of that famous artist in scope and treatment of animal subjects, and his superior in knowledge and in truth and power of conception. It would be a poor compliment to call Edward Kemeys the American Barye; but Barye is the only man whose animal sculptures can bear comparison with Mr. Kemeys's.

Of Mr. Kemeys's productions, a few are to be seen at his studio, 133 West Fifty-third Street, New York city. These are the models, in clay

or plaster, as they came fresh from the artist's hand. From this condition they can either be enlarged to life or colossal size, for parks or public buildings, or cast in bronze in their present dimensions for the enrichment of private houses. Though this collection includes scarce a tithe of what the artist has produced, it forms a series of groups and figures which, for truth to nature, artistic excellence, and originality, are actually unique. So unique are they, indeed, that the uneducated eye does not at first realize their really immense value. Nothing like this little sculpture gallery has been seen before, and it is very improbable that there will ever again be a meeting of conditions and qualities adequate to reproducing such an exhibition. For we see here not merely, nor chiefly, the accurate representation of the animal's external aspect, but — what is vastly more difficult to seize and portray — the essential animal character or temperament which controls and actuates the animal's movements and behavior. Each one of Mr. Kemeys's figures gives not only the form and proportions of the animal, according to the nicest anatomical studies and measurements, but it is the speaking embodiment of profound insight into

that animal's nature and knowledge of its habits. The spectator cannot long examine it without feeling that he has learned much more of its characteristics and genius than if he had been standing in front of the same animal's cage at the Zoölogical Gardens; for here is an artist who understands how to translate pose into meaning, and action into utterance, and to select those poses and actions which convey the broadest and most comprehensive idea of the subject's prevailing traits. He not only knows what posture or movement the anatomical structure of the animal renders possible, but he knows precisely in what degree such posture or movement is modified by the animal's physical needs and instincts. In other words, he always respects the modesty of nature, and never yields to the temptation to be dramatic and impressive at the expense of truth. Here is none of Barye's exaggeration, or of Landseer's sentimental effort to humanize animal nature. Mr. Kemeys has rightly perceived that animal nature is not a mere contraction of human nature; but that each animal, so far as it owns any relation to man at all, represents the unimpeded development of some particular element of man's nature. Accordingly,

animals must be studied and portrayed solely upon their own basis and within their own limits; and he who approaches them with this understanding will find, possibly to his surprise, that the theatre thus afforded is wide and varied enough for the exercise of his best ingenuity and capacities. At first, no doubt, the simple animal appears too simple to be made artistically interesting, apart from this or that conventional or imaginative addition. The lion must be presented, not as he is, but as vulgar anticipation expects him to be; not with the savageness and terror which are native to him, but with the savageness and terror which those who have trembled and fled at the echo of his roar invest him with,—which are quite another matter. Zoölogical gardens and museums have their uses, but they cannot introduce us to wild animals as they really are; and the reports of those who have caught terrified or ignorant glimpses of them in their native regions will mislead us no less in another direction. Nature reveals her secrets only to those who have faithfully and rigorously submitted to the initiation; but to them she shows herself marvellous and inexhaustible. The “simple animal” avouches his ability to transcend

any imaginative conception of him. The stern economy of his structure and character, the sureness and sufficiency of his every manifestation, the instinct and capacity which inform all his proceedings,—these are things which are concealed from a hasty glance by the very perfection of their state. Once seen and comprehended, however, they work upon the mind of the observer with an ever increasing power; they lead him into a new, strange, and fascinating world, and generously recompense him for any effort he may have made to penetrate thither. Of that strange and fascinating world Mr. Kemeys is the true and worthy interpreter, and, so far as appears, the only one. Through difficulty and discouragement of all kinds, he has kept to the simple truth, and the truth has rewarded him. He has done a service of incalculable value to his country, not only in vindicating American art, but in preserving to us, in a permanent and beautiful form, the vivid and veracious figures of a wild fauna which, in the inevitable progress of colonization and civilization, is destined within a few years to vanish altogether. The American bear and bison, the cimmarron and the elk, the wolf and the 'coon—where will they be a generation hence? No-

where, save in the possession of those persons who have to-day the opportunity and the intelligence to decorate their rooms and parks with Mr. Kemeys's inimitable bronzes. The opportunity is great—much greater, I should think, than the intelligence necessary for availing ourselves of it; and it is a unique opportunity. In other words, it lies within the power of every cultivated family in the United States to enrich itself with a work of art which is entirely American; which, as art, fulfils every requirement; which is of permanent and increasing interest and value from an ornamental point of view; and which is embodied in the most enduring of artistic materials.

The studio in which Mr. Kemeys works—a spacious apartment—is, in appearance, a cross between a barn-loft and a wigwam. Round the walls are suspended the hides, the heads, and the horns of the animals which the hunter has shot; and below are groups, single figures, and busts, modelled by the artist, in plaster, terra-cotta, or clay. The colossal design of the “Still Hunt”—an American panther crouching before its spring—was modelled here, before being cast in bronze and removed to its present site in Central Park. It is a monument of which New York

and America may be proud; for no such powerful and veracious conception of a wild animal has ever before found artistic embodiment. The great cat crouches with head low, extended throat, and ears erect. The shoulders are drawn far back, the fore paws huddled beneath the jaws. The long, lithe back rises in an arch in the middle, sinking thence to the haunches, while the angry tail makes a strong curve along the ground to the right. The whole figure is tense and compact with restrained and waiting power; the expression is stealthy, pitiless, and terrible; it at once fascinates and astounds the beholder. While Mr. Kemeys was modelling this animal, an incident occurred which he has told me in something like the following words. The artist does not encourage the intrusion of idle persons while he is at work, though no one welcomes intelligent inspection and criticism more cordially than he. On this occasion he was alone in the studio with his Irish factotum, Tom, and the outer door, owing to the heat of the weather, had been left ajar. All of a sudden the artist was aware of the presence of a stranger in the room. "He was a tall, hulking fellow, shabbily dressed, like a tramp, and looked

as if he might make trouble if he had a mind to. However, he stood quite still in front of the statue, staring at it, and not saying anything. So I let him alone for a while; I thought it would be time enough to attend to him when he began to beg or make a row. But after some time, as he still hadn't stirred, Tom came to the conclusion that a hint had better be given him to move on; so he took a broom and began sweeping the floor, and the dust went all over the fellow; but he didn't pay the least attention. I began to think there would probably be a fight; but I thought I'd wait a little longer before doing anything. At last I said to him, 'Will you move aside, please? You're in my way.' He stepped over a little to the right, but still didn't open his mouth, and kept his eyes fixed on the panther. Presently I said to Tom, 'Well, Tom, the cheek of some people passes belief!' Tom replied with more clouds of dust; but the stranger never made a sign. At last I got tired, so I stepped up to the fellow and said to him: 'Look here, my friend, when I asked you to move aside, I meant you should move the other side of the door.' He roused up then, and gave himself a shake, and took a last look at the panther, and

said he, 'That's all right, boss; I know all about the door; but—what a spring she's going to make!' Then," added Kemeys, self-reproachfully, "I could have wept!"

But although this superb figure no longer dominates the studio, there is no lack of models as valuable and as interesting, though not of heroic size. Most interesting of all to the general observer are, perhaps, the two figures of the grizzly bear. These were designed from a grizzly which Mr. Kemeys fought and killed in the autumn of 1881 in the Rocky Mountains, and the mounted head of which grins upon the wall overhead, a grisly trophy indeed. The impression of enormous strength, massive yet elastic, ponderous yet alert, impregnable for defence as irresistible in attack; a strength which knows no obstacles, and which never meets its match,—this impression is as fully conveyed in these figures, which are not over a foot in height, as if the animal were before us in its natural size. You see the vast limbs, crooked with power, bound about with huge ropes and plates of muscle, and clothed in shaggy depths of fur; the vast breadth of the head, with its thick, low ears, dull, small eyes, and long up-curving snout; the roll and lunge of the gait, like

the motion of a vessel plunging forward before the wind; the rounded immensity of the trunk, and the huge bluntness of the posteriors; and all these features are combined with such masterly unity of conception and plastic vigor, that the diminutive model insensibly grows mighty beneath your gaze, until you realize the monster as if he stood stupendous and grim before you. In the first of the figures the bear has paused in his great stride to paw over and snuff at the horned head of a mountain sheep, half buried in the soil. The action of the right arm and shoulder, and the burly slouch of the arrested stride, are of themselves worth a gallery of pseudo-classic Venuses and Roman senators. The other bear is lolling back on his haunches, with all four paws in the air, munching some grapes from a vine which he has torn from its support. The contrast between the savage character of the beast and his absurdly peaceful employment gives a touch of terrific comedy to this design. After studying these figures, one cannot help thinking what a noble embellishment either of them would be, put in bronze, of colossal size, in the public grounds of one of our great Western cities. And inasmuch as the rich citizens of the West not only know

what a grizzly bear is, but are more fearless and independent, and therefore often more correct in their artistic opinion than the somewhat sophisticated critics of the East, there is some cause for hoping that this thing may be brought to pass.

Beside the grizzly stands the mountain sheep, or cimmaron, the most difficult to capture of all four-footed animals, whose gigantic curved horns are the best trophy of skill and enterprise that a hunter can bring home with him. The sculptor has here caught him in one of his most characteristic attitudes—just alighted from some dizzy leap on the headlong slope of a rocky mountain-side. On such a spot nothing but the cimmaron could retain its footing; yet there he stands, firm and secure as the rock itself, his fore feet planted close together, the fore legs rigid and straight as the shaft of a lance, while the hind legs pose easily in attendance upon them. “The cimmaron always strikes plumb-centre, and he never makes a mistake,” is Mr. Kemeys’s laconic comment; and we can recognize the truth of the observation in this image. Perfectly at home and comfortable on its almost impossible perch, the cimmaron curves its great neck and turns its head upward, gazing aloft toward the height

whence it has descended. "It's the golden eagle he hears," says the sculptor; "they give him warning of danger." It is a magnificent animal, a model of tireless vigor in all its parts; a creature made to hurl itself head-foremost down appalling gulfs of space, and poise itself at the bottom as jauntily as if gravitation were but a bugbear of timid imaginations. I find myself unconsciously speaking about these plaster models as if they were the living animals which they represent; but the more one studies Mr. Kemeys's works, the more instinct with redundant and breathing life do they appear.

It would be impossible even to catalogue the contents of this studio, the greater part of which is as well worth describing as those examples which have already been touched upon; nor could a more graphic pen than mine convey an adequate impression of their excellence. But there is here a figure of the 'coon, which, as it is the only one ever modelled, ought not to be passed over in silence. In appearance this animal is a curious medley of the fox, the wolf, and the bear, besides I-know-not-what (as the lady in "Punch" would say) that belongs to none of those beasts. As may be imagined, therefore, its right portrayal involves

peculiar difficulties, and Mr. Kemeys's genius is nowhere better shown than in the manner in which these have been surmounted. Compact, plump, and active in figure, quick and subtle in its movements, the 'coon crouches in a flattened position along the limb of a tree, its broad, shallow head and pointed snout a little lifted, as it gazes alertly outward and downward. It sustains itself by the clutch of its slender-clawed toes on the branch, the fore legs being spread apart, while the left hind leg is withdrawn inward, and enters smoothly into the contour of the furred side; the bushy, fox-like tail, ringed with dark and light bands, curving to the left. Thus posed and modelled in high relief on a tile-shaped plaque, Mr. Kemeys's coon forms a most desirable ornament for some wise man's sideboard or mantle-piece, where it may one day be pointed out as the only surviving representative of its species.

The two most elaborate groups here have already attained some measure of publicity; the "Bison and Wolves" having been exhibited in the Paris Salon in 1878, and the "Deer and Panther" having been purchased in bronze by Mr. Winans during the sculptor's sojourn in England. Each group represents one of those deadly com-

bats between wild beasts which are among the most terrific and at the same time most natural incidents of animal existence; and they are of especial interest as showing the artist's power of concentrated and graphic composition. A complicated story is told in both these instances with a masterly economy of material and balance of proportion; so that the spectator's eye takes in the whole subject at a glance, and yet finds inexhaustible interest in the examination of details, all of which contribute to the central effect without distracting the attention. A companion piece to the "Deer and Panther" shows the same animals as they have fallen, locked together in death after the combat is over. In the former group, the panther, in springing upon the deer, had impaled its neck on the deer's right antler, and had then swung round under the latter's body, burying the claws of its right fore foot in the ruminant's throat. In order truthfully to represent the second stage of the encounter, therefore, it was necessary not merely to model a second group, but to retain the elements and construction of the first group under totally changed conditions. This is a feat of such peculiar difficulty that I think few artists in any

branch of art would venture to attempt it; nevertheless, Mr. Kemeys has accomplished it; and the more the two groups are studied in connection with each other, the more complete will his success be found to have been. The man who can do this may surely be admitted a master, whose works are open only to affirmative criticism. For his works the most trying of all tests is their comparison with one another; and the result of such comparison is not merely to confirm their merit, but to illustrate and enhance it.

For my own part, my introduction to Mr. Kemeys's studio was the opening to me of a new world, where it has been my good fortune to spend many days of delightful and enlightening study. How far the subject of this writing may have been already familiar to the readers of it, I have no means of knowing; but I conceive it to be no less than my duty, as a countryman of Mr. Kemeys's and a lover of all that is true and original in art, to pay the tribute of my appreciation to what he has done. There is no danger of his getting more recognition than he deserves, and he is not one whom recognition can injure. He reverences his art too highly to magnify his own exposition of it; and when he reads what I

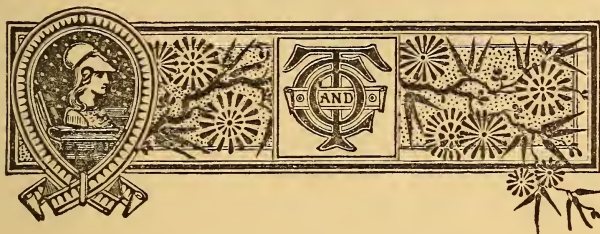
have set down here, he will smile and shake his head, and mutter that I have divined the perfect idea in the imperfect embodiment. Unless I greatly err, however, no one but himself is competent to take that exception. The genuine artist is never satisfied with his work; he perceives where it falls short of his conception. But to others it will not be incomplete; for the achievements of real art are always invested with an atmosphere and aroma—a spiritual quality perhaps—proceeding from the artist's mind and affecting that of the beholder. And thus it happens that the story or the poem, the picture or the sculpture, receives even in its material form that last indefinable grace, that magic light that never was on sea or land, which no pen or brush or graving-tool has skill to seize. Matter can never rise to the height of spirit; but spirit informs it when it has done its best, and ennobles it with the charm that the artist sought and the world desired.

*** Since the above was written, Mr. Kemeys has removed his studio to Perth Amboy, N. J.

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